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Theology

# Evangelical Doctrine Bible Truth by the Rev. C. ANDERSON SCOTT M.A Kensington Presbyterian Church



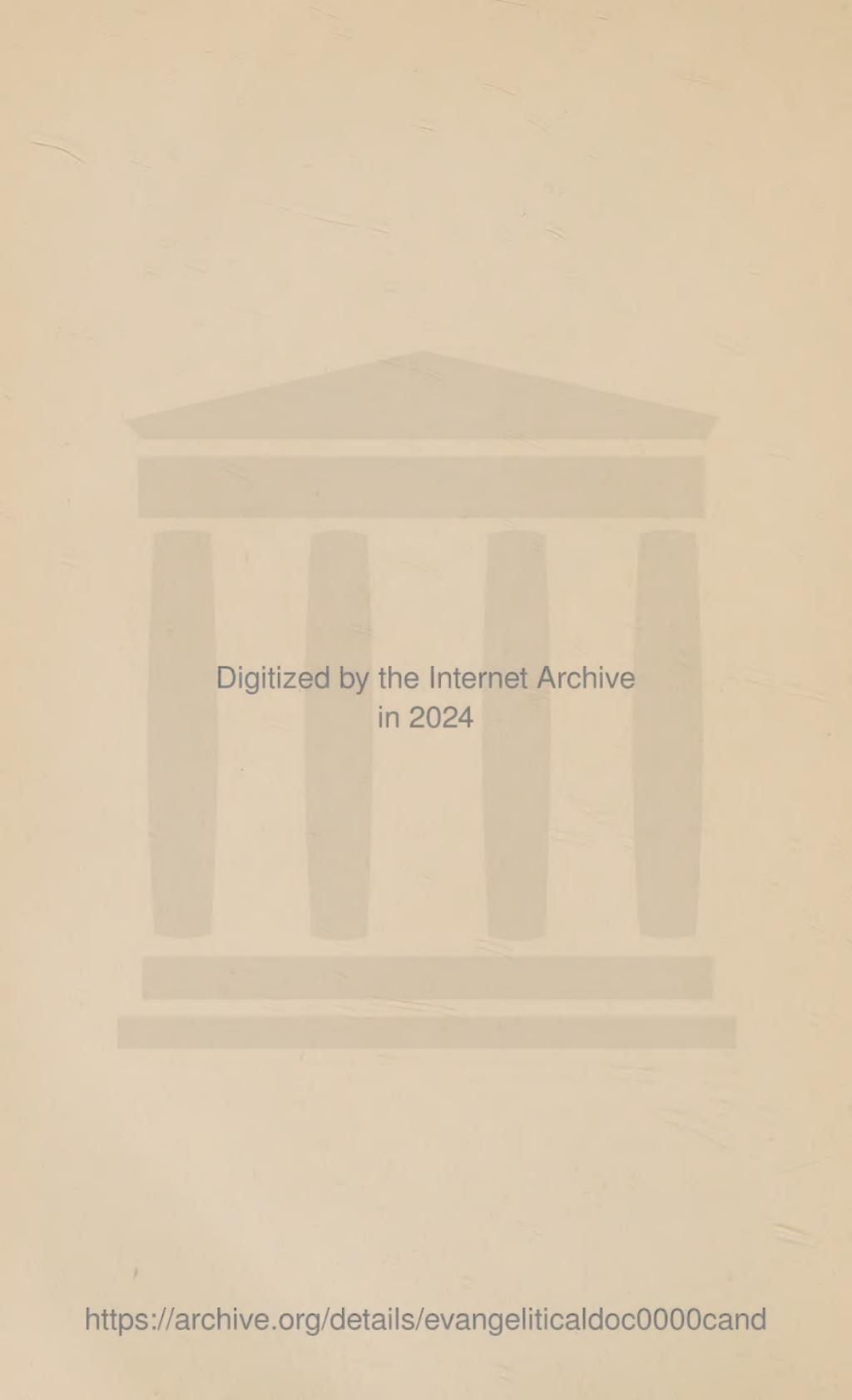
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To  
J. A. S.

*b*



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## Preface

THE appearance of another criticism of the principles of the Anglo-Catholic movement will not be judged either untimely or superfluous. The question is still a burning one ; and no one who is at all interested in the religious life of England can be indifferent to the issue. It must have struck any attentive observer of the controversy, however, that writers on both sides are too much in the habit of deploying their arguments on ground of their own choice, and with a curious indifference to the whereabouts of their adversaries. The result is that in very few cases do the controversialists ever come in sight of one another ; and, though there is plenty of noise of battle, the issue remains undecided.

This futility I have sought to avoid by selecting one well-known handbook of Anglo-Catholic teaching, and showing the successive fallacies and deficiencies of the reasoning it contains. In this way I hope to provide those who may be assailed by like arguments with a sufficient answer on each of the controverted

points. In order, however, that my work might not be merely critical, or useful only as an antidote to one book, I have gone beyond these limits in two directions. I have, to some extent at least, indicated the line of defence against arguments drawn not from Scripture but from the early Church, and I have sketched the positive doctrine on Church and Sacraments which is the common heritage of the Reformed Churches.

As to the form which this volume has taken, that, namely, of *Letters* addressed to an Anglo-Catholic, it may be said that it arose out of an actual correspondence with a Churchman on one of the subjects here treated, in the course of which I recognised considerable advantages in such a form. It has been employed in connection with this controversy by Canon Knox Little and M. Edmond Scherer, to speak only of moderns.

I have made a point of drawing my quotations as far as possible from Anglican sources. As a matter of fact all the English writers I have quoted, with, I think, two exceptions, are, or were, Churchmen. At the same time, I venture to think it will be recognised by those who know, that those authorities are really authorities on the points for which they are quoted.

It is only adherence to this purpose to depend on Anglican authorities that has prevented me from

making use of such excellent works as Dr. Fairbairn's *Catholicism Roman and Anglican*, Dr. Mellor's *Priesthood*, and Dr. John Brown's *Apostolical Succession*. To the last, however, I owe some useful quotations from Anglican sources. I should like to express my thanks to Rev. R. E. Welsh for much kind help, especially in reading the proofs.

I have written in the earnest desire to guard and fortify those who are in danger of being led into serious error, but also in the not less earnest desire to promote that spiritual unity which has been set before us by our Lord as the condition of the Church's victory over the world. This will not be achieved by saying "Peace" when there is no peace. With priestcraft and superstition we can make no terms. But on this side of the lines so clearly drawn by the Reformation there is a unity real and deep; all the more real because it is held along with many diversities of type in thought and organization. The recognition of that unity within a certain area was the great achievement of the closing years of last century. May the fruits of it be found in this.

C. A. S.

KENSINGTON,

*March, 1901.*



## Contents

	PAGE
I	
“CATHOLIC” AND “PROTESTANT” . . . . .	3
II	
THE AFFIRMATIONS OF PROTESTANTISM . . . . .	27
III	
THE “UNITY” OF CATHOLICISM . . . . .	37
IV	
WHAT IS THE SCRIPTURAL MEANING OF “THE GOSPEL?” . . . . .	49
V	
THE PRAYER-BOOK SERVICE AND THE CHURCH YEAR . . . . .	63
VI	
BAPTISMAL REGENERATION . . . . .	75
VII	
THE MEANING OF BAPTISM . . . . .	99
VIII	
THE LORD’S SUPPER . . . . .	113

	PAGE
IX	
THE LORD'S SUPPER: THE FIGURATIVE VIEW . . . . .	133
X	
THE LORD'S SUPPER: THE ANGLO-CATHOLIC VIEW . . . . .	143
XI	
THE LORD'S SUPPER: THE CATHOLIC RE- FORMED VIEW . . . . .	165
XII	
CHRISTIAN SACRIFICE: FALSE AND TRUE . . .	181
XIII	
THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY: IS IT A PRIEST- HOOD? . . . . .	205
XIV	
CHURCH GOVERNMENT . . . . .	225
XV	
CHURCH AND MINISTRY (Continuation) . . .	247
XVI	
APOSTOLICAL SUCCESSION . . . . .	267
XVII	
THE CHURCH . . . . .	289

## “CATHOLIC” AND “PROTESTANT”

“He is rather the schismatic who makes unnecessary and inconvenient impositions than he who disobeys them because he cannot do otherwise without violating his conscience.”—  
JEREMY TAYLOR.

# *Letters to an Anglo-Catholic*

## I

### “CATHOLIC” AND “PROTESTANT”

You call yourself a Catholic and me a Protestant ; and you seem to think that that establishes a comfortable barrier between us—comfortable for you I mean, for it does appear in some odd way to add to your comfort as a Christian to be separated as much as possible from your fellows. A list of the Christian Churches or “communities” with whom you have “no dealings” would embrace all Christendom,—with the sole exceptions of the two Churches, the Roman and the Greek, which decline to recognise you. I have nothing to say against such isolation. In itself it may be “magnificent.” There are traits in human character to which it may minister gratification ; but I must say that when this is presented to us as the result and fruit of “Catholic teaching,” as the issue of a system which more than any other lays stress on unity and claims to have a special

recognition and commission from our Blessed Lord, we cannot but be filled with surprise and pain.

But without enquiring at present how far this eager desire to keep yourselves apart from others who worship the same God in the name of the same Saviour, is consistent with the spirit of Christ, let us first examine this verbal barrier which you set up between us.

You claim the name of Catholic in some sense which excludes me. You call me Protestant in some sense which denies that I or my Church or its teaching have a right to be recognised as “Catholic.”

Now, do these two names represent a true anti-thesis? You use them as if they were mutually exclusive. In the practice and fashion of to-day they may be so; but historically and theologically they are not. We have never surrendered the claim to Catholicity which was made by the Reformers on behalf of their doctrine, their discipline, and their Church. They knew themselves to be Protestant but also Catholic, the more truly Catholic because through the Reformation they had recovered the doctrine and discipline of the primitive Catholic Church.

The names “Catholic” and “Protestant” seem to you to be mutually exclusive only because in quite recent years you have put certain meanings into each of them which properly belong to neither. And if

we are to discuss the differences between us in anything like a scientific spirit, we must recognise that the true antithesis of "Protestant" is "Roman" or "Papal," and the only true antithesis of "Catholic" either "non-Christian" or "heretical."

It is indeed by a curious irony of linguistic history that this almost sacred name of "Catholic" has come in recent years to be appropriated as the private property of a small party in one of the dozen Churches to which it rightly belongs. The other Churches of Germany, Scandinavia, France, America, Scotland, the other "communities" alongside your own in England, are Christian; they are not heretical. According to any definition of "Catholicity" which you would give or be prepared to accept, the faith they hold is the "Catholic" faith. And yet they are Protestant.

You invite me to become a Catholic. I cannot, for I am already one, a member of the Catholic, Universal Church. When I say, in the course of public worship, "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church," I sincerely own that there is such an institution upon earth, and as sincerely claim and believe that the particular Church to which I belong is a branch of that Universal or Catholic Church.

But you reply: "That is not what I mean by the Catholic Church. Whatever else the Catholic Church may be, it is something which excludes

your Church, seeing that it is not governed by bishops, and is not in communion with the Archbishop of Canterbury.”

Quite so. But then the question is, By what right do you give this meaning to the word “Catholic”? Is it on the ground of Scripture, or of reason, or of history? You must have some sufficient answer to these questions, for you take away from my Church an honourable name which justly belongs to her, and then you upbraid her with the want of it, with being only “Protestant.”

Let us examine the history of this name which you claim as honourably distinguishing your teaching, your practices, your Church from those of other Christians.

Needless to say, the name is not Scriptural. In that respect it has no advantage over the names bestowed upon, or assumed by, other sections of the Christian community. So far as the word appears in our Bibles at all, in the late titles to certain Epistles, it furnishes evidence of the sense in which the word was used in the second or third century, the simple, etymological meaning of “general,” “universal.” It is attached to those Epistles which are not designated to any particular community but to the whole Church at large.

We turn to the history of the word in Christian literature. Its earliest appearance as a description of the Christian Church is found in the Epistles of

Ignatius; and the meaning he attaches to the word is one I am quite prepared to abide by—“Wherever Jesus may be, there is the Catholic Church.” The writings of Ignatius have proved so useful a storehouse of evidence in support of “high Catholic” views of the ministry and the episcopate, that it is all the more surprising to find him so defective in his conception of Catholicity. So comprehensive and so spiritual a view would, I fear, be branded nowadays as “Protestant.” It depends, of course, on the simple and etymological meaning of the word, and is, in fact, a touching echo and interpretation of our Blessed Lord’s own words, “Where two or three are gathered together in My name there am I in the midst of them.” The same conception underlies the use of the word by the Church of Smyrna in their Epistle narrating the martyrdom of Polycarp. They address it to the “Church of God which sojourneth at Philomelium and to all the brotherhoods of the holy and universal (Catholic) Church sojourning in every place.” The consciousness of Catholicity was still (about A.D. 160) a consciousness of spiritual unity in a common experience of redemption.

A very different conception is that which came to be defined towards the end of the fourth century, having been developed in the course of the Church’s struggle with heresy. A definition of Catholicism

was laid down by imperial decree. They, and they only, who held the Nicene doctrine of the Trinity had the right to call themselves Catholics. And once more, after an interval of five centuries, and in consequence of a further development, we have a third conception embodied in the authoritative declaration of Hildebrand, “Let no man be accounted a Catholic who is not in agreement with the Roman Church.”

These three definitions of Catholicity may be taken as representative of the three main types of Christian opinion on the subject which have at various times prevailed. The first, which was held throughout the first two centuries, presents a conception closely related to the origin of the word. “Catholic” meant “general,” “universal.” It was applied by Justin Martyr to the resurrection, by Tertullian to the goodness of God. As a distinguishing epithet of the Church, the Church’s faith or the Church’s practice, it expressed the universal mission of the Church to all mankind, the completeness of the Church’s teaching of things necessary for salvation, and the common basis of Christian life and worship as realized in the many scattered communities of Christians. Even among those communities which claimed for themselves and granted to one another the name of Catholic it cannot be supposed that there was absolute uniformity either of thinking or of practice. From

the very beginning there was a recognition, at least implicit, of the distinction between things essential and things indifferent. In this stage of the world's history the force of the word was primarily inclusive. It expressed the Church's sense of unity within itself, of the unity of all those who worshipped Christ as the risen Son of God. It emphasized that breaking down of barriers, social, national, and political, which was part of the actual experience of the early Church—the Christian consciousness that in Christ Jesus there was neither Jew nor Gentile, bond nor free.

In the course of the second and third centuries, however, the direction of the word came to be reversed. Differences of opinion on great doctrines of the faith made their appearance, which went so deep as to cut the bond of Christian unity. Heresy which impinged upon the essential contents of the Christian consciousness forced that consciousness to define itself in opposition to false views. Not all that claimed to be Christian could establish its right to be called by the name. Whatever failed to approve itself by the test of Scripture and continuous tradition was extruded. Over against these developments the term "Catholic" acquired a significance of exclusiveness in the sense of orthodox as distinct from heretical. To the criterion of spiritual unity in Christ was added a new criterion of intellectual agreement about Christ. But still

within the Catholic Church so understood there was much variety of opinion on subordinate questions, much diversity of practice. That is to say, the later criterion did not invalidate or supplant the earlier. Room was still found for the principle enunciated by Ignatius, “Wherever Jesus may be there is the Catholic Church.”

But the second criterion tended gradually to displace the first. Intellectual agreement became the dominant consideration. The Church gave formal definition to its faith in the Creed of Nicæa. It also entered into an alliance with the State. Spiritual unity is not a thing of which the State can take cognizance. “Catholic,” therefore, became a legal and technical term to describe that institution which the State had taken under its protection ; and the State proclaimed its own definition of the term. Those and those alone were to be recognised as “Catholic Christians” who held the doctrine of the Trinity in accordance with the Nicene Creed. But the same decree of Theodosius which thus defined Catholicity on a purely intellectual basis also opened the way for yet another, a third, conception and definition of Catholicity. For the religion which the Emperors required their subjects to profess was further described as that which had been communicated by the Apostle Peter to the Romans. And though this imperial definition of

Catholicity remained unchallenged, it was gradually modified in practice by the growing influence of that other conception which had also received recognition. The Church of Rome emphasized more and more its claim to define the contents of the Catholic Faith, and the form of Catholic practice, until the terse formula of Hildebrand, “Let no man be accounted a Catholic who is not in agreement with the Roman Church,” became a true description of the situation. This formula was arrived at as the result of a process which, though it began before him, received its chief impulse from Cyprian (*c.* 200–258). It was a process the effects of which were seen in all departments of Christian thought and worship, a process of return to the religious level of Judaism, the exaltation of letter and form above spirit and life, a process in the course of which all that was most characteristic of Christ’s religion was lost; and of this process we have a striking illustration in the history of this word “Catholic.”

Throughout the Middle Ages the Roman Church adhered to and elaborated the definition of Hildebrand. The idea of universality which inheres in the word “Catholic” was interpreted of the universal jurisdiction to which that Church laid claim. The notion of orthodoxy which had become attached to it was governed by the vast and incoherent mass of patristic

and scholastic tradition inaccessible and equally incomprehensible to the people. The dogma of the Pope's infallibility is at once the logical issue of this process and a necessary escape from the confusions and contradictions of Roman theology. That was the final step in the externalizing and materializing of Christianity. And it is the conviction that your party has committed itself to a like process which stirs us both as Englishmen and as Christians. It is not only that the end of the process is a tyranny of the worst kind, but that somewhere in the course of it there is a point at which both truth and righteousness are relegated to a subordinate position in the heritage of the Church. The cynical acknowledgment that a man can be a good Catholic though a bad Christian is not unjustly taken to reflect the consciousness of a Church which has made Catholicity to consist in spiritual and intellectual subjection to the Pope.

Now the question which presses for a solution, and to which you are bound to give an answer, is this : When you call yourself a Catholic, what do you mean ? on which of these conceptions of Catholicity do you claim ? You insist that your Church possesses exclusive privileges because it is Catholic, that its teaching has special authority because it is Catholic, that its sacraments and forms of government have exclusive validity because they are Catholic. What then is

the significance in which you use this all-important word?

The Catholicity which depends on submission to the Pope you neither have nor are willing to have. You continue to reject his supremacy. By what right? You repudiate some at least of the doctrines which by the Roman Church have been declared to be of the Catholic Faith. It is true that through representatives of your party you have approached the Pope asking for even a qualified recognition of the Catholicity of your Church. By so doing you have acknowledged that he is, at least *de facto*, an authority on the question. And, indeed, if extent and continuity of external jurisdiction, if worldly prestige and influence, lend any weight at all to claims to Catholicity, your anxiety to be even in some measure recognised by Rome is easily understood. On such grounds as these no Church on earth can challenge comparison with her. And she has declared against you. Your claim has been contemptuously rejected. On the Roman theory of Catholicity your Church is not Catholic, your Sacraments are not valid, you are mere pretenders.

You fall back, therefore, on some other theory of Catholicity. You allege your harmony of doctrine and practice with some uncorrupted Catholic Church in some unspecified century. I observe that it is

exceedingly difficult to discover what is the minimum or the maximum of truth or practice which is rightly called Catholic and for which we are in search of a criterion. You have no standard, no authoritative documents, no authoritative persons from whom you or I or any one else can ascertain what is Catholic, missing that quality neither by excess nor by defect. You have endless handbooks and manuals, of which I suppose you have taken one for your guide ; but every one of them is the product of individual idiosyncrasy and bears the marks of its origin. Practically you depend for your standard of doctrine and of practice quite as much on your particular religious newspaper as on anything else. St. Paul remonstrated with the Corinthians for styling themselves after particular teachers, and you are not slow to mock at certain branches of the Church of Christ which happen to be commonly described by the name of a man. But wherein are they better who say in effect, “I am of the *Church Review*,” and “I of the *Church Times*,” and “I of the *Guardian*”? Careless or ignorant outsiders may be willing to grant to all these the title they claim of “Catholic,” but you know even better than I do that each one of them represents a different level of practice if not of doctrine ; each one breaks off at a different point from the stream of development which ends in Trent and the

Papacy of to-day. And of the point where he shall break off he himself is the only judge. You call it Catholicism, but could there be a more rampant individualism ?

But even supposing you were agreed as to what is Catholic in doctrine or practice, how do you prove that this and no less, this and no more, is the Catholic faith and the Catholic standard of practice ? At what point in the development of Christian theology do you part company with the Romanist, and what reason can you give for stopping there ? If you pass the limit of the undivided Church, you have nothing by which to determine where orthodoxy ceases and "corruption" begins. On the other hand, if you stop short at that limit, you may have a better reason for calling yourself Catholic, but you have no reason for calling us anything else, no reason for denying our claim to be as truly Catholic as yourself. For we too hold the Creeds of the first six œcumenical councils, the faith of the undivided Church. Every article of the Nicene Creed is part of the faith of all the great Reformed Churches. If by calling yourself Catholic you mean to distinguish yourself from Protestants on the ground of orthodoxy, you must point to some article of the faith which is yours and not ours : if by the use of the same name you wish to connect yourself with Romanism, you have to show by what

right you reject so much which Rome has declared to be *de fide*.

It is possible that you have some vague notion that your Catholicity finds support in the so-called Vincentian Canon, “*quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus.*” But a moment’s consideration shows how little that can help you. For what doctrine outside the Nicene Creed fulfils any one of these conditions, not to say all of them? What practice beyond preaching and the administration of the sacraments can claim to have been observed always in all places and by all Christians? In appealing to such a standard you really deceive yourself, and are in danger of “building the highest castle of your faith upon a guess.”

It seems, therefore, that orthodoxy as a criterion of Catholicity fails to give you what you require. It neither differentiates you from Protestantism, nor does it put you on an equality with Rome. You are thrown back, therefore, on the first and earliest significance, of the word. If you desire to be Catholic, you must be so either in the primitive or in the fully developed Roman sense. Between these two there is no logical standing ground. And if you accept the only alternative that is really open to you, and seek to realize your Catholicity in the primitive sense, in the sense of the first two centuries, you will see in it the

most comprehensive description of Christianity as a system of thought and life. Used to describe what is, it embraces all those “that love the Lord Jesus in sincerity,” all those communities where the word of God is faithfully preached and the Sacraments duly administered. Used to describe what by God’s will is appointed to be, it presents to our faith the consummation towards which we are slowly to approximate, a kingdom of truth and righteousness worldwide in its extent and absolute in its authority. The word “Catholic” signifies that universality of the Church whereby all divergences of faith and practice which do not touch essentials are held together in one bond of spiritual union.

It ought surely to weigh with you that not only can you produce no other ground on which to explain and justify your claim to Catholicity, but that this was the view of Catholicity adopted by the Fathers of the English Church at the time of the Reformation and for long afterwards. They denied the Catholicity of Rome on the ground that she had erred in certain essentials of the faith. On the other hand, they never doubted that they themselves were truly Catholic in doctrine and worship. They acknowledged and rejoiced in the Catholicity of the other Reformed Churches—those of Germany, France and Switzerland—on the ground that they too had retained or recovered the primitive

purity of doctrine and discipline. The martyrs of the Marian persecution suffered and died as Catholics. They were Protestants too, but that does not convict them of absurdity, but rather convicts you of a false division. It is a solecism of thought, a perversion of history, which denies that a Church can be Protestant in doctrine, in discipline and in organization, and yet be truly Catholic.

This was understood with perfect clearness by the great divines of the Church of England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, by the men who shaped its polity, framed its Articles, and compiled its Liturgy. Your clergy, when they take Orders, solemnly declare their assent to the proposition that, “The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men in the which the pure Word of God is preached and the Sacraments be duly administered according to Christ’s ordinance in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same” (Art. XIX.). This is not your (Anglo-Catholic) theory of the Church, but ours. It came into your Articles from the Lutheran Confession of Augsburg. The same conception of the Church is enshrined in your prayers, even if it be denied in your teaching. “More especially we pray for the good estate of the Catholic Church ; that it may be so guided and governed by Thy good Spirit that all who profess and call themselves

Christians may be led into the way of truth and hold the faith in unity of spirit.” Or again, in the Prayer for the Church Militant : “ Beseeching Thee to inspire continually the universal Church with the spirit of truth, unity and concord ; and grant that all they that do confess Thy Holy Name may agree in the truth of Thy Holy Word.” If there could be any doubt that the Catholic Church is here described in the one case as “ all that profess and call themselves Christians,” and in the other by the phrase, “ all they that do confess Thy Holy Name,” it would be removed by the language of the Bidding Prayer : “ Ye shall pray for Christ’s Holy Catholic Church ; that is, for the whole congregation of Christ’s people dispersed throughout the world.”

I do not wish to trouble you with many long quotations, but this point requires illustration. The fact that the English Reformers, both lay and clerical, took for granted the Catholicity of their position and of their Church is overlooked and obscured by your writers in a way that is hardly creditable.

I take a few cases almost at random. John Philpot, Fellow of New College, Oxford, and Archdeacon of Winchester, was martyred in 1555. In the course of the prolonged examinations to which he was subjected his appeal is consistently to the Scripture and the primitive Church. “ I do not dissent,” he

says, “from the true Catholic Church; I do only dissent from the Bishop of Rome, where if you can prove to be the Catholic Church of Christ, I will be of the same also with you.”<sup>1</sup>

But the position of the Reformers is most clearly seen in such questions and answers as the following :

*Bishop of Worcester* : “You said that if we did burn you, we should burn a Catholic man. Will you be a Catholic man and stand to the Catholic Church?”

*Philpot* : “I will stand to the true Catholic Church.”

*Bishop of Worcester* : “Will you stand to the Catholic Church of Rome?”

*Philpot* : “If you can prove the same to be the Catholic Church, I will be one thereof.”

In like manner (to show that this was the view held by the laity also) Mistress Anne Askewe, burnt at Smithfield in 1546, relates of her examinations : “Then my lord (the Bishop of London) sat down and took me the writing to set thereto my hand, and I writ after this manner : ‘I, Anne Askewe, do believe all

<sup>1</sup> *Examinations and Writings of Archdeacon Philpot*, p. 113. He quotes Augustine : “The Church is defined by St. Augustine to be called Catholic in this wise : ‘The Church is called therefore Catholic because it is thoroughly perfect and halteth in nothing’” (p. 137).

manner of things contained in the faith of the Catholic Church.’ Then because I did add unto it ‘the Catholic Church,’ he flung into his chamber in a great fury.”<sup>1</sup>

A characteristic exposition of the doctrine of the Church of England during this period, when its liturgy was being formed, is found in the Catechism of Thomas Becon, Chaplain to Archbishop Cranmer. Thus :

*Father* : “Why is the Church called Catholic or universal ?”

*Son* : “Because it is not bound to one certain place, kingdom or empire, but is dispersed throughout the whole world, so that in all places God hath his elect and chosen people, which believe on Him, call on His holy name and worship Him according to His word, even in spirit and in truth according to the commandment of Christ.”

The son then proceeds to enumerate the “four tokens,” “whereby we may truly and undeniably know the true Catholic Apostolic Church.” And they are, first, the sincere and uncorrupt preaching of God’s Word ; second, the true administration of the Sacraments according to the institution and ordinance of Christ ; third, fervent prayer and the diligent in-

<sup>1</sup> *Select Works of Bishop Bale*, p. 177.

vocation of God in the name of our alone Mediator, Jesus Christ ; fourth, ecclesiastical discipline according to the prescript and appointment of God's Word.

This is plainly a totally different conception of Catholicity from that which you are now trying to establish and enforce upon us all. And the awkward thing for you is that this conception did once prevail in the Church of England, and that for many years among its bishops, its divines and theologians, and also among its lay members. It is this conception which colours all references to the subject in your Prayer-Book, and the same which is made authoritative by your Articles. Now, quite apart from the question which of the two conceptions of Catholicity, yours or mine, may be right, you have to explain how your Church could make such a breach with what you now call the “Catholic faith,” and on this very question, and yet preserve her continuity. The latest fashion among your party is to treat the Reformation as a “regrettable incident.” This is a great deal more astute than the line adopted by such men as Dr. Littledale, who taught that the martyrs of the Reformation deserved their fate. But it is every whit as false to history. The breach which your Church then made with the Roman conception of Catholicity was only one of many like breaches, any one of which was sufficient to destroy the kind of continuity you claim, while all

of them taken together spell, not a "regrettable incident," but a Revolution.

And, indeed, I wonder you do not see the quandary you are foolishly preparing for yourselves. If "Protestant" and "Catholic" be really mutually exclusive, if a Church that is Protestant has lost Catholicity, then you must surrender the claim to Catholicity for yourselves. For beyond all doubt there was a period, and that not a short one, in the history of the English Church, when it was frankly, conscientiously and officially Protestant. It was as a "Protestant Power" that England had to face and fight the Armada. We have the authority of the late Bishop of London for saying that Elizabeth herself was a Protestant, and spoke of her country as "Protestant England." Archbishop Laud declared at his death that he had "always lived in the Protestant religion established in England." Archbishop Sancroft urged the Bishops of his Province to take "all opportunities of assuring and convincing" "our brethren the Protestant Dissenters" "that the bishops of this Church are really and sincerely irreconcilable enemies to the errors, superstitions, idolatries and tyrannies of the Church of Rome."

And while the Church of England was thus wholly cut off from Rome, it was, on the other hand, on terms of closest sympathy with the Reformed and "Protestant" Churches of the Continent. Their

orders were recognised. Men who had been ordained abroad passed freely into the ranks of the English clergy. “During the reign of Elizabeth and of James I. the clergy of non-episcopal Churches outside England were, in the opinion of the day, accounted regularly ordained priests; under Elizabeth, and temporarily after the restoration of Episcopacy under Charles II., priests who had not been ordained by bishops were allowed to officiate even within the Church of England.”<sup>1</sup>

Beyond all challenge the Church of England has been for more than three centuries Protestant in its head, in its name, in its doctrinal standards and in its sympathies. It is surely a very dangerous thing, then, for you to teach men that what is Protestant cannot be Catholic. You are, as I said at the beginning, trying to establish a false antithesis. Much that is Protestant is truly Catholic, and the Catholic Church of Christ is larger than you think.

<sup>1</sup> See Makower, *Constitutional History of the Church of England*, § 18.

THE AFFIRMATIONS OF  
PROTESTANTISM

“It is a mistake to judge the work of moral emancipation achieved by the Reformation by the incident of that *protest* against the diet of Spires which gave rise to the word Protestantism. Protestantism was not, as neo-Christians affirm, a work of negation or of criticism with regard to that epoch; it was a *positive* Christian production, a solemn manifestation of the individual man—sole object and aim of Christianity.”

—MAZZINI.

## II

### THE AFFIRMATIONS OF PROTESTANTISM

I HAVE honestly tried to understand your use of the word “Catholic.” I cannot think you either understand it yourself, or can justify the use you make of it. It is an innovation in our diction, a solecism in our literature. It lacks equally a rational and an historical basis. I must confess it annoys me, in the first place, as an offence against our common speech. But still more it distresses me as involving the degradation of a great idea, an idea which is part of the heritage left to the Church by our Blessed Lord Himself. And to what end do you do this damage to our common heritage? By a somewhat unscrupulous use of this word “Catholic” you annex to a section of the Church what belongs to the whole. You speak of “Catholic doctrine,” “Catholic worship,” “Catholic saints,” as if these belonged to your denomination alone. You have taken one of the great ideas of the Christian consciousness, the concep-

tion of an all-embracing unity in the Spirit, and degraded it into something artificial, sectarian and untrue. You have taken from the Church the name which expresses its most glorious characteristic, and turned it into the badge of a party.

If you so little understand the name you take to yourselves, it is small wonder that you misunderstand and so persistently misrepresent the name you put upon us. I have no objection to the name “Protestant” as an appellation, a convenient label for certain Christian communities which have thrown off the yoke of Rome, or for certain opinions and practices which require to be differentiated from those of the corrupted Roman Church. But the name for our Churches and for those of our opinions in which we differ from the Romanists, which is both historical and accurate, is “Reformed.” The name of “Protestant” is popular, accidental and uninforming. And when you argue, as so many of your controversialists now do, from the supposed meaning of the word “Protestant” to the *ethos* of our system or the character of our doctrines, you are simply misleading yourself and others. You must be familiar with the kind of statement to which I refer. I take one example from a well-known handbook : “The word Protestant means making a protest. Protestant is a negative term, and does not express positive belief

of any kind. It is a mistake for a Churchman to describe himself as a ‘Protestant,’ for the term is nowhere to be found in the Bible or the Prayer Book, and ought not to be adopted as a designation by the Church or her members.” If the reason given in the last sentence were universally applied, it would make sad havoc of much that is called “Catholic,” but has no authority either in the Bible or in the Prayer Book. But from the assertion in the former sentence it is but a short step to that which is so often made, that Protestantism is “a mere bundle of negations.” There is, in fact, so much loose thinking and hasty assertion on this point in the popular literature on your side that I must ask you to examine what ground there is for these vague but not the less injurious charges. At the same time observe this difference between us. You assert a doctrine, a practice, because it is “Catholic.” To you the name is all-important. To me the name Protestant has no such importance. I assert a doctrine, or a practice, not because it is Protestant, but because it is Scriptural, and in the true sense Catholic; in some cases also because it is not Roman but Reformed, not mediæval but primitive. I am not bound to all that is Protestant as you are bound to all that may be proved to be Catholic, but only to what is Scriptural and primitive.

In the first place, then, we are told that the word

Protestant carries with it the condemnation of the system it describes, because it denotes a system which is critical and not constructive, one which protests and denies, but does not proclaim and assert. To dismiss a system simply on the ground of an interpretation of the name which you give it is of course mere quibbling ; but even your interpretation is wrong. For the word, so far from always denoting denial, criticism, attack, may be used with equal propriety in the sense of “assert,” “maintain.” One man protests his loyalty, another protests his innocence, another his readiness to do whatever he is asked. Is not that good English ? Have your friends forgotten,—

“ Bid me to live, and I will live,  
Thy Protestant to be” ?

Or do they suppose that the poet was offering to Althea a “mere bundle of cold negations” ? So memorable a case to the contrary ought to have made impossible this unintelligent assertion that “Protestant” always means negation, denial.

But if that be not the necessary meaning of the word, is it not the meaning historically connected with the party of the Reformation ? We must look at the origin of the word in its ecclesiastical usage. People talk and write sometimes as if the Reformation sprang into being at one moment, from the brain of one man,

Luther, and had been baptized on the spot by the name of "Protestant." Even those who habitually convey such an impression must be well aware that it was something very different—a continuous movement of human thought, having its beginning far back in the Middle Ages. As an organized revolt against the dominion of Rome it makes its appearance almost simultaneously in several centres, independent of one another. Both as an intellectual uprising and as an ecclesiastical movement it had been active, and had made already great strides, several years before the Reformers received the name of "Protestants." And even then the application of the name was due to the accidental extension to the whole movement of the title of a single political document.

We are in the habit of dating the Reformation as a deliberate and successful attempt to restore primitive Christianity from the year 1520, the year in which Luther nailed his theses to the door of the cathedral at Wittenberg. It was not till nearly ten years after that, not till 1529, that he or his party or his teaching began to be called by the name of "Protestant." All the main doctrines which are to-day associated with the name, doctrines which you now seek to condemn by discrediting the name, were being taught and rejoicingly accepted by a large part of central Europe long before the word "Protestant" was used at all. And when

it was used, it was not in a religious but in a political sense, to describe those princes and other members of the diet of Speyer, who joined in solemn protest against the invasion of their political rights by the Roman party. It was only by a historical accident that the name “Protestant” was afterwards extended to those who agreed with them politically, and then to those who were also in harmony with their religious and theological opinions—that is, to the Reformers.

It is seldom either wise or fair to argue at all from the name of any party which is opposed to us. It is generally a nickname, not expressing its real character, and accepted, if accepted at all, only through force of circumstances. But it is specially unfortunate in this case, where, through misinterpretation of the name, a totally false impression of the system is produced. For so far was the Reformation from being a merely negative movement, that its strength and success lay in the vigour and pertinence of its affirmations. Men do not die for negations, neither are they fired to enthusiasm by a system which “does not express positive belief of any kind.” The affirmations of Protestantism were plain enough to preclude any possibility of mistake. They were—

1. The Bible is in itself sufficient as a guide to faith and as a standard of practice.
2. Men are justified by faith.

3. All true believers are by Christ made priests before God.

The joy with which these announcements were hailed, the readiness with which they were accepted, and the exulting sense of freedom and spiritual enlargement by which they were followed, prove that not only in form but in essence they were positive affirmations.

You will not, I hope, fall back on the retort that these affirmations imply corresponding negations. Of course they do. You would find it difficult to assert any important truth, especially on a subject which had caused great difference of opinion, without at least tacitly denying a number of contrary errors. When Galileo declared "E pur se muove," he denied that the sun stands still, but he also made a positive contribution to human thought. Your Athanasian Creed contains a large number of positive assertions ; but there is not one of these which is not there for the very purpose of denying some contrary error. Nevertheless, you would hardly call it a bundle of "cold negations," or the system it represents a merely critical one.

I beg you, therefore, to give no further heed to such unworthy quibbles. Protestantism is no more free from error than any other human system of interpreting the revealed mind of God. But it is not either in its origin, or in its essence, or in its present mani-

festation a merely critical or destructive force. It is a protest against the errors and corruptions of Rome ; but it is a protest of the great truths of our religion, a re-enunciation of the Fatherhood of God, of the Mediatorial power of Christ, of the universal operation of the Spirit, and of the validity of Christian experience, as these were apprehended by the Apostolic and Primitive Church. And specifically it embodies an affirmation of the privileges and responsibilities of the individual, of the spiritual unity of the Church, and of the predominantly ethical character of our religion. These were not new principles invented in the sixteenth century. They are in the New Testament. But during the Middle Ages they had been ignored, suppressed, and almost eliminated from Christianity. It concerns you as well as us, for it concerns our common loyalty to Christ, to find for them their proper place, to assign to them their due emphasis in the religion of our land. This will not be done by any who fail to do justice to the Reformation, still less by any who hide their ignorance by contempt.

## THE “UNITY” OF CATHOLICISM

“ As it is noted by one of the Fathers, ‘ Christ’s coat, indeed, had no seam, but the Church’s vesture was of divers colours’ ; whereupon he saith, ‘ In veste varietas sit, scissura non sit.’ ”—LORD BACON.

### III

#### THE “UNITY” OF CATHOLICISM

You reply to my former letter that even if Protestantism be not essentially and historically a negative and destructive system, it is intrinsically and historically a prey to disunion, that the spectacle of warring sects which it presents is in itself a disproof of its claim to stand in the line of the Divine purpose. You speak of “the dissidence of dissent” and “the welter of Protestant sects”; and you seem to have still before your mind that notorious and long-exploded list of religious bodies in England, some three hundred of them, which were supposed to represent divisions of Protestantism.

And you point by way of contrast to what you call the imposing unity of the Catholic Church.

In both cases you fall into serious and misleading exaggeration.

In the first place, you must excuse my pointing out that the unity of the Catholic Church is either a spiritual unity, in which case it may include all the Re-

formed Churches ; or it is an external unity, in which case it is the unity of a Church to which you do not belong. By remaining outside the Roman Church you deprive yourself of all share in a unity of that kind, however imposing. And at the same time you acknowledge, I am glad to say, that there is something higher even than external unity, something for the sake of which it is right to sacrifice even the unity which you so much admire. You deny yourself what is the desire of your heart, in order that you may be faithful to some truth which is rejected or corrupted by Rome. For this we honour you. But your position involves certain admissions. We also see some truth for the sake of which we feel bound in conscience to remain apart from you. You must admit at least the possibility that such an attitude is justified. For it is your own. You cannot rightly taunt us with unreason, or with obstinacy, or the sin of schism. We have our explanation of our attitude as you have yours. And you should not find it difficult to understand that our outward separation from you may be as much a matter of conscience with us as yours from Rome is with you.

But, further, this unity of the Catholic Church which you find so imposing is a gigantic delusion. It is an external unity beneath which there is neither the bond of peace nor the unity of the Spirit. When, by

some chance we are allowed to penetrate this outward mask of unity which covers the Church of Rome, we find a veritable turmoil of divergent ideas, aims and policies, a hereditary struggle between the regulars and the seculars, between the monks and the bishops, between one Order of monks and another. The truth is, the Roman Church has her sects as numerous and as well marked as the Protestant, and far more fiercely opposed to one another. The secret of her success has been that she has known how to retain under her patronage and control, to use for her own advantage, most of those movements which in the circle of the Reformed Churches have led to the formation of new communities. The orders and congregations of the Roman Church correspond to the "sects of Protestantism." A movement like that headed by John Wesley last century, which by the English Church was superciliously cast out, would by the Roman Church have been taken hold of, manipulated, and appropriated to her own advantage. She has always known how to combine rigidity of organization with elasticity of principle. These Orders all acknowledge the authority of the Pope; they all labour for what they conceive to be the glory of the Church. But, at the same time, each Order looks back to its own founder, and forward to its own success, cultivates its own type of piety, consecrates its own methods of activity, and embodies a

distinct religious idea.<sup>1</sup> Thus many divergent tendencies of thought and practice co-exist within the same pale ; and there is no reason why they should not be knit in a true unity. But that is not the state of the case. It is well known that the most influential of the Roman Orders struggle with one another for the mastery with a fierceness which has now, at any rate, no parallel among the Protestants, and condescend sometimes to methods of securing their ends against which the Christian conscience protests. We have a recent illustration in the *Biography of Cardinal Manning*. Even so extremely candid a biographer as Mr. Purcell did not dare to publish the history of Manning's struggle with the Jesuits ; but from the material which he did give to the world we can form a picture of the inner life of the Roman hierarchy which is neither beautiful nor edify-

<sup>1</sup> The correspondences between various “Protestant” types and different “Orders” within the Roman Church have been indicated by Mr. A. V. G. Allen (*Christian Institutions*, p. 273). He finds the parallel to the Lutheran Church in the Augustinian Order, to the “Reformed” in the Dominicans, to the Wesleyan Methodists in the Franciscans, and to the Congregationalists in the Benedictines. The intellectual and spiritual tendencies, which in the one case have embodied themselves in distinct Churches, in the other have taken shape in as many distinct organizations, round which the Roman Church puts a ring fence of external unity.

ing. In France we see the bishops tyrannizing over the parish clergy, while helpless against the monastic Orders. Rome remains to this day what it has been for a thousand years, the hot-bed of intrigue, where plot is met by counter-plot, and money on one scale outweighs justice in the other. And when an unusually unjust decision has been given, the Pope cynically remarks, "It is a *coup d'état* of Almighty God."

What really gives the impression of unity to this extraordinary collection of warring sects is the formal acknowledgment by all of one Head, the uniformity of attitude adopted by all to those who are outside, and, more especially, the steadiness of what may be called the Foreign Policy of Rome. This it owes to the fact that it is an autocracy. Like Russia in the political world, Rome pursues a clear and definite policy from generation to generation. All subordinate aims and fractional ambitions are concentrated through the Curia on one end, and that a material one, the advancement of the political power of the Papacy. The Reformed Churches, on the other hand, correspond in their organization to England, with her democratic constitution, her representative government, and her apparent lack of continuity in foreign policy. But as in the history of our Empire we see the working out of purposes which are less material

than moral, and find the basis of our common life in a unity of spirit, of sentiment and of tradition, rather than in anything formal or external, so the Reformed Churches, for all their superficial differences of type and organization, are truly held together by a common allegiance and a common spiritual aim.

For, just as you mistake and exaggerate the unity of the Catholic Church, so you absurdly misrepresent the dissidence of Dissent. You exaggerate the depth, and you exaggerate the number, of divisions in Protestantism. There is no such cleavage between any two bodies of Evangelical Christians outside the Church of England as that which divides the Church of England itself. And, while their unity is much more real than you imagine, their number is much fewer than you assert. As a matter of fact, the great body of Evangelical Christians who are outside the borders of the Established Church in this country is subdivided into only four great groups, or, if you will reckon minor divisions of Methodism, into seven ; and the attempt to represent these as radically antagonistic, and actually hostile to one another, is as untrue to the facts of the situation as the attempt to exaggerate their number. It is true they differ. Methodists, Congregationalists, Baptists, and Presbyterians—they differ in constitution and form of government ; they differ in the emphasis which they respec-

tively put upon particular truths and doctrines ; they may differ slightly in the type of piety which they severally cultivate and produce ; but the very character of these differences shows how large an area of Christian doctrine these branches of the Reformed Church hold in common. They are absolutely at one in their acceptance of the great verities of our religion—the Being and Fatherhood of God, the Divinity of our Blessed Lord, the Personality of the Holy Spirit, the Redeeming Work of Christ, the hope of everlasting life. They are also at one in the Gospel which they preach, as to the human need and sin which it presupposes, the Divine remedy and sufficient grace which it sets forth, and the duty of all men to believe. They agree in recognising the obligation and value of the Sacraments. Some assign more meaning to these than do others, but even here there is a minimum upon which all are at one.

There may have been a time—in fact, there was a time—when the spiritual bond which unites these communities was less clearly recognised than it now is, when each of these churches laid more stress on that which differentiates it from the others than on that which unites it to them all. But that time has passed. It would not be true to say that any of them has surrendered its special testimony ; but while each has learned to respect the testimony of the others, all

have come to lay yet greater emphasis on that which they hold in common, and that is the faith of the Reformed Church of Christ.

The truth is that we have been growing towards one another ; whereas you have been growing apart. We can exchange pulpits, we can worship in one another's Churches, we can gather round the same Communion Table ; whereas you do all you can to distinguish yourselves, not only from other "communities" of Christians, but even from a section or sections of your own Church. You are taught in different training schools, you speak a different ecclesiastical dialect, you inveigh in pulpit and in Press against the doctrines taught and the worship performed by your brethren, you must needs have for almost every form of Christian activity duplicate Societies, which compete with one another for the support of every parish. In half the Churches of the land you would as little think of communicating as in ours. It passes my comprehension how you can for very shame vaunt the "unity" of your Church. You have cut yourselves off from every great Church in Christendom : first, from the Roman Church, then from the great Lutheran Church, from the Reformed Churches of the Continent, and finally from the other Churches of Christ in your own land. When I go abroad, I am welcomed by, and at home with, any Reformed

Church I come across. You find no such fellowship, for the only Church where you seek it regards you as a heretic and a schismatic. And at home you belong to a Church which, so far from being one, is only held together by a legal and external bond.

If you will reflect on these things, you will say less about our "divisions," and a good deal less about the "unity of the great Catholic Church."

I have been discussing "unity" on the basis of the conception which you cherish and insist on. But I should like to recall to you that other conception by which we assert our unity among ourselves. For it is a conception which allows me to rejoice in a true unity between you and me. I am going to traverse a great many of the positions you take up, to deny, and I hope show good cause for denying, many things which to you seem certain. But I should not like to forget that, for all that, there is between us also a great deal of common ground, and that on matters which lie at the very heart of our religion. Touching all these great truths which I have already recapitulated, wherein the Reformed Churches are at one amongst themselves, they are also at one with you. Neither of us does, or can, charge the other with heresy. We thankfully acknowledge that we have with you "one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one

God and Father of all.” And I wish, in all that follows, to keep steadily in mind that the things about which we differ are not the fundamentals of our faith. In so doing I seek to give effect to the command involved in the prayer of our Lord, “that they all may be one.” And I would ask you in the same great Name to follow the same course. For it is with pain that we observe that many who write and speak for your party rather minimize, obliterate, or practically deny the common ground between us. Their object seems to be to emphasize differences, to erect walls of partition, to invent new names for old things which we hold in common, and turn them into Shibboleths of division. I wish you would consider what this means. To me it appears nothing else than the spirit of schism.

## WHAT IS THE SCRIPTURAL MEANING OF “THE GOSPEL”?

“A religion that is a true religion must consist of ideas and facts both ; not of ideas alone without facts, for then it would be a mere philosophy ; nor of facts alone without ideas of which these facts are the symbols, or out of which they arise, or upon which they are grounded, for then it would be a mere history.”—COLERIDGE.

## IV

### WHAT IS THE SCRIPTURAL MEANING OF "THE GOSPEL"?

You ask me whether I have read that well-known book of Sadler's, which first convinced you of "the falsity and unscripturalness of the Protestant position." Yes, I have read it and been familiar with it for some years. I recognise many things in it which might impress you ; but had you more closely studied theology, or even had you taken the trouble to examine Sadler's book in the light of the Scriptures to which it appeals, you would never have been carried away by it. I recognise the writer's earnestness, his controversial skill, his plausibility ; but his earnestness is forensic rather than religious ; his skill lies in his selecting a class of facts when he ought to deal with all, and his plausibility is due to a shallow mind, which ignores rather than overcomes the arguments of his opponents. But as you think the book an authoritative statement of your case, I am quite willing to discuss it with you, and to show you where, as it seems to me, its fallacies lie.

The first chapter is an excellent illustration of the method of the book ; and if we go into it somewhat fully, we shall be able to deal more rapidly with what remains.

In raising in his first chapter the question, “ What is the Scriptural meaning of the term ‘ the Gospel ’ ? ” Mr. Sadler aims a blow at the very heart of the Protestant position. For if we have not a “ Gospel ” to preach, or if our Gospel is not a Scriptural one, then the justification for our existence is gone.

The sum of his contention is briefly this. “ The Prayer Book is Scriptural on the subject of all others of the greatest moment, which is the exhibition of the Gospel under the form in which it is presented to us in Scripture,” because in the repetition of the Creed, the Litany, and the Te Deum, and specially in the observance of the “ Church Year,” it secures the regular presentation of the facts of our Lord’s Life, Passion, and Resurrection. Those Protestant communities, on the other hand, which do not use the Prayer Book are not Scriptural, because they do not secure the same presentation of the facts, neither is the Gospel they profess and preach itself “ Scriptural,” because either it adds to the facts doctrines, or, as is actually suggested, substitutes doctrines for the facts.

I will not enlarge upon the amazement with which

one cannot but regard statements and insinuations such as these, but simply point out that—

1. It is not true that the word “Gospel” in the New Testament is applied exclusively to the announcement of certain events occurring at a particular time in the history of the world.

2. The “Gospel” in the New Testament stands for the facts and something more—some interpretation of the facts, some theory in which the facts cohere.

3. There is no Protestant evangelical community where the facts, or any of them, are habitually ignored, still less where we find an “exclusive contemplation of the doctrines apart from the facts.”

4. The Prayer Book, which secures the presentation of the facts, does nothing to secure the due and proper interpretation or application of the facts, which, according to Scripture, is an equally important element in the Gospel.

The passages which Mr. Sadler quotes and relies upon are the following :

“ The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God ” (St. Mark i. 1).

“ Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand ; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered

unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures ; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures ” (1 Cor. xv. 1-4).

“ The gospel of God, (which He had promised afore by His prophets in the holy scriptures,) concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh ; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead ” (Rom. i. 1-4).

“ Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come : that Christ should suffer, and that He should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles ” (Acts xxvi. 22, 23).

“ Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel ” (2 Tim. ii. 8).

On these passages Mr. Sadler comments thus : “ The great work of the Church of Christ is to set forth the Gospel of her Lord. If He has committed His truth to our keeping, it is for us to see that we retain that truth in its fulness, and that we transmit it

unimpaired. It is plain also that if God has set forth the Gospel in some particular form, we must adhere to that form, and not substitute for it any other which may seem to the eye of man more practical or more spiritual." So far nothing could be more true or obvious. But the writer proceeds to assert, on the ground of these same passages, that the one authorized form of "the Gospel" is the presentation of the facts, for "the word 'Gospel' in the New Testament is applied exclusively to the announcement of certain events occurring at a particular time in the history of the world—the Incarnation, Baptism, Ministry, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus." Notice the word "exclusively." What does he mean to exclude? He means to exclude the Protestant conception of the Gospel as containing a "theory of salvation," an explanation of the purpose of God which was wrought out through these events, and of the way in which the grace lying within these events is to be obtained by man. He does not deny that the New Testament contains information, revelation on these and kindred points, but what he strenuously contends is that such matters form no part of "the Scripture Gospel." His object is to bring all such explanation down to a lower level than that on which all Christians agree to place "the Gospel," and so he devotes many pages to proving that "Scripture never brings before us the

Gospel of Christ except as the record of certain facts respecting Him.” It follows that the Church fulfils her function of preaching the Gospel, not by the proclamation and exposition of man’s need, God’s grace, and man’s opportunity as set forth in these great facts, but by the mere presentation of the facts to the mind of man whether by ear or by eye. It follows also that those who preach not only the facts but some interpretation of them, some theory arising out of them, though what they preach may indeed be Scriptural, are not preaching the “Scriptural Gospel.”

And so we get an undoubtedly clever, specious, and plausible justification of Ritualism—all the more plausible because it purports to be based upon Scripture. And if a reader choose to shut his eyes to what else Scripture has to say upon the subject, or if he be imperfectly acquainted with Scripture as a whole, he may easily be led into serious error.

But, as a matter of fact, the passages which Mr. Sadler quotes neither prove his point nor do they exhaust the evidence.

That St. Mark’s Gospel is pointedly entitled, “The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ,” and that “consequently we have the Holy Spirit’s testimony to the fact that what St. Mark wrote was the Gospel,” does not carry him far. For even inspired men used words in the sense in which they were understood by

others, and by the time St. Mark's Gospel was written the word Gospel "had acquired a secondary meaning, namely, 'the record of the acts and sayings of Christ.'" If the word here bore the meaning Mr. Sadler would assign to it, it is surely very remarkable that this particular Gospel does not announce either the Birth or the Temptation of our Lord. But that it is not the meaning here a glance at any good commentary will show. The phrase is either "the title of the section" (Gould), and not of the whole document, or it marks the transition from the usage of the word within the Gospels to its later use as a name for the biographies of Christ (Holtzmann).

As to the passages cited from St. Paul, you will see, if you examine them, that they have this remarkable characteristic in common—no one of them enumerates all the facts. None of them refers at all to the Baptism or to the Temptation or to other facts which Mr. Sadler insists on. But not even the three fundamental facts—the Birth, Death, and Resurrection—are combined in any of these passages in which St. Paul describes his "Gospel." One is silent about the Incarnation, another about the Passion. No one will suppose that St. Paul's Gospel, or any Gospel worth the name, would omit either of these facts. It follows, therefore, that the Apostle cannot be said to give a complete account of his Gospel in any of these

passages ; and if he omitted some of the facts, his complete Gospel may have contained also some theory of the facts to which he makes no reference either ; and we shall see that it did so.

Arguments are drawn again from the preaching of the Apostles as recorded in the Book of Acts. Now it is quite true that the burden of their preaching was the witness they bore to the fact that Jesus had risen from the dead ; they referred also to the death of Christ, but said little or nothing about His birth, and, so far as we are told, nothing at all about His ministry. The reason is plain : the Apostles were preaching to Jews, whose conscience had been trained for generations in the elementary facts regarding man's need of righteousness and the conditions of approach to God. They preached very much as John the Baptist preached ; only instead of a Messiah to come, they pointed to a Messiah who had come. They had to show how the apparent destruction which had overtaken Him through death had only led to the full manifestation of His glory through the Resurrection.

But even allowing for the comparatively narrow scope of their preaching, thus dictated by their circumstances, and the absence of necessity for preaching to Jews a Gospel as fully developed as was required by the Gentiles, it is going much too far to say that the outlines of the Apostolic discourses are such as

“could not possibly be filled up with what is now called a Gospel sermon.” The aim of every sermon recorded in the Acts was to produce repentance ; the purpose of God in raising Jesus was to bless men “in turning away every one of you from his iniquities” ; Christ is “exalted” “for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins” ; and the climax to which St. Paul’s great sermon at Antioch moves is the announcement “through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins : and by him all that believe are justified from all things.”

In the face of utterances such as these it is vain to appeal to the Apostolic preaching for proof that the “Gospel” as presented in Scripture consists of the facts and the facts alone.

So far, therefore, the evidence on this point adduced by Mr. Sadler furnishes no *à priori* reason for dismissing from our Gospel any theory, inference or scheme of salvation simply because it is more than the facts.

But we can go further, and show that some theory of the facts is both necessary, and actually attested by Scripture as belonging to the “Gospel.” It is obvious that the facts must be put into some relation to one another before they can be a narrative at all ; and they must be put into some relation to human life and history before they can have any in-

fluence on human thinking or on human conduct. Both that it may be comprehensible and that it may be effective the Gospel must consist of the facts *and more*. And this is felt by Mr. Sadler himself when he comes to describe the Apostolic preaching. He cannot describe it in terms of the events alone, but in terms of the principles which the events reveal : “the Gospel of the primitive Church was the proclamation of God’s love to a sinful world as set forth in the Death, Burial and Resurrection of Jesus.” Precisely, but this is surely just the nucleus of a “Gospel sermon” of the very kind which Mr. Sadler so disparages.

But some unifying conception of the meaning of the events is not only necessary, it was plainly present in the primitive Gospel. For proof we need not go beyond St. Paul’s Epistle to the Galatians. What moved the Apostle to write that letter was a serious and insidious attack on his “Gospel.” His own authority as an Apostle had also been impugned, but even that concerned him chiefly because of its indirect result—the rejection of his Gospel, and the substitution of another. He “marvels that the Galatians have been so quickly transferred to another Gospel.” He denounces in the most emphatic manner any one whatever who should preach a different Gospel from his own. Now wherein did this new Gospel differ

from the old one which St. Paul and his companions had preached to the Galatians at the first? Not in regard to the facts. No one suggests that the other Apostles, St. James or St. Peter, either preached or countenanced a Gospel which omitted any one of the fundamental facts of our Lord's ministry. Equally with St. Paul they too preached the Birth, Baptism, Death and Resurrection. As far as the facts are concerned the Gospel of St. Paul and the Gospel of St. James were identical. The difference, therefore, must be found in something outside the facts.

The same conclusion must be drawn from St. Paul's statement that he communicated to those at Jerusalem the Gospel which he preached. Such a course would have had no meaning, had not the Apostle understood by "the Gospel" something over and above the events of our Lord's life and death.

In fact a consideration of this Epistle shows clearly that the very quality and vital characteristic of St. Paul's Gospel which he was so anxious to maintain lay in its being a plan of salvation differing in essential principle from the plan of the old covenant. His "Gospel" was an exposition of God's relation to men in the light of the facts of Redemption. These facts are projections on the plane of history of eternal realities and relationships. They are events through which and under which we are to discern the char-

acter and the will of God. And, whether as individuals or as the Church of Christ, men are called upon to make known the will of God as thus revealed, recognising that will as the contents of the Divine Gospel. If Christ was born into the world as the Incarnate Word of God, it was because “God so loved the world that he gave His only begotten Son.” If His name was called Jesus, it was because “He came to save His people from their sins.” If He died, it was for our justification. If He died for our justification, it was because men were unjust and sinners in the sight of God. If He rose again, it was for our sanctification, and because without holiness no man can see the Lord. Now put these Scriptural inferences from the facts together (and they are of the very simplest and most obvious); arrange them in the order of human experience, and you get a theory of salvation, no portion of which can be left out without mutilating and destroying the Gospel.

We see thus, from the usage of the word, from the Apostolic preaching and from the nature of the case, that it is not true to say that the Scriptural “Gospel” is constituted by the “leading events” to the “utter exclusion of any more doctrinal or abstract form of Divine truth.”

THE PRAYER-BOOK SERVICE AND  
THE CHURCH YEAR

“Ye observe days, and months, and seasons, and years. I am afraid of you, lest by any means I have bestowed labour upon you in vain.”—ST. PAUL.

## V

### THE PRAYER-BOOK SERVICE AND THE CHURCH YEAR

THE purpose which Mr. Sadler has in view is to establish the exclusive validity of the Prayer Book as a Scriptural form of worship. It is not merely the superiority of the Prayer Book that he is concerned to maintain, but the actual impropriety of any other form of worship or method of setting forth the Gospel. He writes in his usual sweeping style :

“ I do not merely say that it is Scriptural to fasten these events on these days, and to associate as far as possible the day with the deed ; I go much further, and say that no form of public prayer or liturgy, or any directory of public worship, or any mode of conducting public worship without form or liturgy, can be accounted Scriptural unless it similarly recognises these days and seasons, for no other way is now possible of setting forth in the public services of the Church that historical aspect of the Gospel which, as we have seen, is the only one contained in Scripture.”

It is plain, however, that if that historical aspect of

the Gospel be not the “only one contained in Scripture,” this claim falls to the ground, and with it the summary dismissal of every other form or method of public worship.

The reiteration of the facts alone is not necessarily Scriptural, for, however important, it does not exhaust the Church’s duty in proclaiming the Gospel. She must also have and proclaim some coherent and effective message drawn from the events. And the nature of the message, its correspondence with the truth, the aptness of its form to the needs of men, is as important as the presentation of the facts themselves.

There is even less ground for the contemptuous dismissal of Protestant worship and Puritan preaching. Certain reasons for this dismissal, which throughout this chapter are insinuated rather than stated, are wholly without foundation.

It is simply not true, as is suggested more than once, that Protestants or Puritans substitute anything whatever for the facts of Redemption. They proclaim, set forth and rejoice in the facts, and the same facts, as truly as you do. If they add to the mere presentation of the facts an interpretation and application of them, they do not thereby disown or disparage these facts. Depending on the Holy Spirit, who leads men into all truth, and guided by the whole Word of

God, they set forth a full Gospel, doing justice to the entire revelation of God in Christ as the Redeemer of His people.

It is still less true that the “Protestant sects flung to the winds the great outward facts of Redemption” when they abandoned the celebration of Easter and Christmas Day. The Reformation would never have triumphed as it did, it would never have established a permanent hold on one half of Europe, if it had not sprung from an intense quickening of the realization of these very facts and their meaning. The leaders of the Reformation taught men to give these facts higher honour by giving them a new place in their lives. That they ceased in a large measure and for a long period to attach the commemoration of these events to particular days was a necessity of their situation. They shrank, and not without reason, from the mass of superstitious observances and ceremonies which had accumulated round the great festivals of the Church. These overgrowths did not so much adorn as obscure and pervert the message of the day. Many of them were actually pagan in their origin and association. If these great festivals fell into desuetude, it was because they were felt by the quickened conscience of the Church to be centres of danger, while at the same time not really necessary for Christian worship or for Christian life.

Neither was this attitude of the Reformed Churches without full warrant in Scripture. Mr. Sadler says with curious forgetfulness : “ So that it is as strictly in accordance with Scripture to keep Christmas, Epiphany and Good Friday, though there is not one word in Scripture respecting the keeping of these days.” He forgets that there are some very strong utterances in the New Testament against the keeping of days at all. It is one count in St. Paul’s earnest remonstrance with the Galatians that they “ observe days and months and seasons and years ”—having substituted such observance for the true knowledge of God. The same Apostle, writing to the Colossians, warns them to resist the encroachments of the false teachers who pursued the same policy, ignoring the fact that the handwriting of ordinances “ had been blotted out,” and imposing the observance of annual, monthly or weekly festivals. The Scriptural evidence on this point is, in fact, so far from lending support to the upholders of a Church Year that they would be wiser not to refer to it. If such observances are not prohibited, they are certainly not encouraged in the New Testament ; and any attempt to enforce them as binding on the Christian conscience, or on the Christian Church, is expressly barred by inspired authority.

To make the observance of the Church Year a

criterion of a Church's faithfulness to Scripture is little short of ridiculous.

There is no evidence of the keeping of the Christmas festival prior to the year 360 A.D.

The Church of the first three centuries observed but three annual festivals, Epiphany, Easter and Pentecost.

What the primitive martyr and missionary Church of these centuries did without, cannot be binding or necessary for the Church of to-day. The observance of the Church Year is like the use of a liturgy, a matter within the competence of each branch of the Church to settle upon grounds of expediency alone.

On these grounds of expediency a great deal can be said for the arrangement, so long as it is duly subordinated to more important considerations. But for the purpose which is claimed for it by Mr. Sadler, the purpose, namely, of continuously presenting the events of our Lord's Life and Death, your Prayer-Book arrangement is curiously insufficient. It crowds into the first six months of each year the commemoration of all the great events in our Lord's history, and leaves an entire half of every year during which there is no special provision for the commemoration of any of these events. Were I to argue as Mr. Sadler has done in regard to the "Protestant sects," from the defect of obligation to defect of practice, I might assert that for half the year the Church of England

neglects the presentation of the great facts of Redemption. It will not be an effective reply to point to the Creed and the Litany as providing for the presentation of these facts even during this long annual *lacuna*. For the same end is achieved in the public worship of the Nonconformist Churches by the unfailing commemoration of the same facts in the Prayers, and in some cases by the recitation of the same Creed.

Your Church Year is defective in the very thing which is claimed for it. It is only half the year which “in its silent course preaches the Gospel” (as it is defined by Mr. Sadler); for the rest of the period it is literally silent.

But at the best this method only secures in a mechanical way what is obtained among us without any such arrangement. To argue from the fact that we have no liturgy, no compulsory arrangement of the Church Year, to the assertion that we fail to present the facts or even to present them with fulness and regularity, is surely a little childish. Even less than that acquaintance with an alien system which is incumbent on any one who offers to criticise it would suffice to assure you that no charge could be more groundless. Certainly the reproach which has been most commonly urged against the Protestant Churches has been the exact converse of this, namely, that they tend to

dwell too exclusively upon the central facts and truths of the Gospel to the neglect of other matters, such as the Church and the Sacraments and even the ethical side of Christianity. The truth is that Mr. Sadler seems to have been entirely without material for his criticism of the “Protestant Gospel.” What he is really attacking is what he supposes to be the burden of Protestant preaching. And for the character of that preaching he appeals to the *Westminster Confession* and *Calvin’s Institutes*—documents in which Christianity is expounded as a theology not as a Gospel. Neither of these great monuments of Reformed learning offers a definition of the Gospel ; and no “Gospel sermon” that is preached, nowadays at any rate, is ever constructed on the lines of these dogmatic treatises. We believe that they are unsurpassed as expositions of the Christian Faith ; but we find our Gospel in the New Testament, and would no more think of preaching them than you would think of preaching Athanasius *Against the Arians*, or Anselm’s *Cur Deus Homo*.

But I go further, and point out that while your system does secure, though only partially, the successive presentation of the great facts of Redemption, it does nothing to secure their proper interpretation or application to the consciences of men. What strikes us so painfully is the failure of this system to produce

a religious nation. For three centuries you have had an unequalled opportunity. Till lately your position as the authorized teachers of religion in England was practically unchallenged. Your system has been tried under the most favourable conditions. And the result is seen in that condition of religious life in England which we all deplore—whole sections of society both ignorant and indifferent alike to the truth and to the power of religion. These people and their forefathers have been under the undivided care of your ministry for generations. Half the population of our great towns has been drawn from villages where this Anglican “gospel” has been before them from their cradles. And look at the result ! We cannot but trace it in part at least to the working of this theory of the Gospel which contents itself with the presentation of the facts, but, having no secured interpretation of them, fails either to reach the intellect or to touch the conscience.

I judge by the people I have known who are the direct products of the system, by the sermons which we see reported in religious newspapers, and by the collections of sermons for the Christian Year of which so many are published ; and I cannot escape the conclusion that, whatever else the system may accomplish, it does not secure the central purpose of the Church’s existence, the faithful and persistent presentation of

Christ and His Gospel in such a way as to lead men to find in Him their Saviour and to worship Him as their Lord.

You have nothing, I say, to secure this. The Homilies are obsolete. The XXXIX. Articles are practically inoperative. Even flagrant heresy touching our Lord's Divinity has recently been published and met not even with Episcopal censure ; and lesser aberrations both of defect and of excess abound unchecked.

I take a piece of evidence which falls into my hand as I write. I find it in a Church newspaper which represents your party.

“ Then as to the subjects of the sermons in these ‘ beautiful ’ services. Are they such as St. Paul, St. Peter or the other Apostles loved to dwell upon ? Do they breathe in every line the spirit of Him Whose ministers and ambassadors they are ? Alas, no ! Instead, the preachers are continually dwelling on the need of earthly supports and means to work out our salvation ; on the importance of the Holy Church ; on how much there is to be learned from the lives of the Saints and the Fathers of the early Church. As often as not the name of the Author and Finisher of our Faith is not even mentioned. No wonder then that the preachers do not touch the hearts of their hearers, and as a remedy cry out for more attractive

and more elastic services. But the earnest Christian knows that this is not what is wanted.”<sup>1</sup>

The very beauty of your Liturgy, which we all recognise and rejoice in, becomes a snare when you allow zeal and precision in its performance to take the place of the proclamation of the truth which it enshrines. Those ideas for whose presentation you take no security and which appear on good evidence to be all too commonly absent from your preaching, are not only part of the Gospel; they are an essential part of it. As Coleridge says: “A religion that is a true religion must consist of ideas and facts both; not of ideas alone without facts, for then it would be a mere philosophy; nor of facts alone without ideas of which those facts are the symbols, or out of which they arise, or upon which they are grounded, for then it would be a mere history.”

<sup>1</sup> *Guardian*, June 20, 1900, p. 896.

## BAPTISMAL REGENERATION

“*Prius est prædicare, posterius tinguere.*” —*TERTULLIAN.*

## VI

### BAPTISM

You believe in Baptismal Regeneration, and I grieve to think that on this point there is a deep and essential difference between us. Nevertheless, let us keep in mind the common ground which there is between us even on this point.

We all—Romanists, Greeks, and Protestants—are agreed in regarding Baptism as a Sacrament instituted by our Lord, of perpetual obligation in the Church, and to be administered to those born within the Christian community as well as to those who join it from without. On these points nothing could be clearer than the Westminster Confession, which declares that this “Sacrament is, by Christ’s own appointment, to be continued in His Church until the end of the world,” and further speaks of it as “a great sin to contemn or neglect this ordinance.”

I hope, at least, that you are further agreed with us in holding that Baptism is only “generally necessary” to salvation ; that is to say, that “grace and salvation

are not so inseparably annexed unto it that no person can be regenerated or saved without it.” For thus only can you dissociate yourself from the horrible Roman doctrine that unbaptized infants are shut out from heaven. This doctrine, which is so persistently ascribed to Calvin and the Calvinists, is not Calvin’s, and is Rome’s. It is one which not only outrages our tenderest affections, but also is untrue to our Lord’s express teaching on the subject. And yet this doctrine that the unbaptized, whether infant or adult, are lost, is only a logical inference from the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration.

At this point I suppose we must part company. Without having actually drawn the inference to which I have just referred, you hold that there is such a connection between the outward act of Baptism and a certain inward change as to make it the sole instrument of obtaining salvation, having in every case for its result “regeneration.” Now whatever you may mean by “regeneration,” you mean, as we do, a change the most momentous that can take place in any human being; you mean all that we ascribe to conversion, a change so momentous as to reverse a man’s destiny for all eternity. It is not merely a legal change affecting man’s status before God, such as by a fiat of Divine will might be attached to any condition, but a moral change, by which “we are

made new creatures in Christ.”<sup>1</sup> It is independent of every other condition save this external one of Baptism. Repentance, Faith, Conversion, Obedience, whatever their significance, play no necessary part in this transformation. Whatever is secured by Baptism is secured without any or without all of them.

You may think I am exaggerating the implications of this doctrine ; but look at the terms in which the matter was expounded by J. H. Newman while he was still an Anglican. “The Sacraments are the immediate, faith is the secondary, subordinate, or representative instrument of justification.” “Faith being the appointed representative of Baptism derives its authority and virtue from that which it represents. It is justifying because of Baptism : it is the faith of the baptized, of the regenerate, that is, of the justified. Justifying faith does not precede justification, but justification precedes faith and makes it justifying. And here lies the cardinal mistake of the views on the subject which are now in esteem. They make faith the sole instrument, not only after Baptism, but before ; whereas Baptism is the primary instrument, and makes faith to be what it is and otherwise is not.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Council of Trent*, sess. xiv. cap. 2.

<sup>2</sup> J. H. Newman, *Lectures on Justification*, p. 257.

Or again, in a modern Anglican handbook I find the following :

“ The effect of Baptism is threefold :

“ 1. It remits all sin, original and actual.

“ 2. It bestows sanctifying grace, and endues the soul with the heavenly virtues of faith, hope, and charity.

“ 3. It makes the recipient a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.”<sup>1</sup>

Now let us be perfectly clear on the matter. The distinction, though it is of far-reaching importance, is quite a narrow one.

“ Regeneration comes through Faith and Baptism ; and of the two, Faith is the absolutely essential condition.” That is Scriptural and Protestant.

“ Regeneration comes by Baptism alone.” That is “ Catholic,” and not Scriptural.

Now I confess that this conception of Baptism is utterly repugnant to a Protestant. It seems to empty Christianity of its moral and spiritual contents by making its highest blessings dependent neither on a moral act nor on a spiritual relationship, but on an external rite in which the recipient may be wholly passive, unconscious, or even indifferent. It brings

<sup>1</sup> Staley, *The Catholic Religion*, p. 243.

our religion down to the level of magic. Alike by what it asserts—the efficacy of the external rite, and by what it denies—the essential character of Repentance and Faith, it seems to stand in flagrant contradiction to the mind and teaching of Christ.

Still, I have tried to find how wise and good men, believing themselves to be guided by the New Testament, have come to hold this amazing view of Baptism. I cannot say I have got much help from Mr. Sadler. He seems to write with very slight acquaintance with the controversy, and with no perception of the difficulties of his case. In consequence he leaves many points obscure, and indeed in one paragraph he gives his case away. I refer to his comment on the passage in 1 Peter: “The assertion ‘Baptism doth now save,’ taken in connection with the limiting clause, ‘not the putting away of the filthiness of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God,’ means of course that Baptism saves only when received in repentance and faith; for no man can give the answer of a good conscience toward God except he repents and believes.” Regeneration, which comes through Baptism conditioned by faith and repentance, is not “Baptismal Regeneration.” Even if, as he adds, it is in, and not before, Baptism that these conditions are to be fulfilled, the introduction of these subjective conditions robs the

doctrine of its sole attraction, the certainty of the result.

Mr. Sadler bases this doctrine upon twelve passages of Scripture,<sup>1</sup> from which he deduces the following conclusions :

“I. In about twelve places in Scripture Christ or His apostles connect Salvation with Baptism.”

(But the question is, What is the nature of this connection ? Is Baptism the cause, by itself the sufficient instrument, of Salvation ?)

“II. The Christians of the Apostolic Churches are always addressed as having been brought into a state of Salvation or Regeneration at their Baptism.”

(But even if this were universally true—and it is not so—“at their Baptism” is not equivalent to “by their Baptism,” and that is what he requires to show.)

“III. This state of Salvation or Regeneration does not ensure the final salvation of those brought into it. On the contrary, the members of these Churches are always supposed to be in danger of falling into sin and liable to be cast away.”

(Scripture and Reformed theology alike recognise the possibility that members of the Church, even

<sup>1</sup> John iii. 3-5; Mark xvi. 16; Acts ii. 38, 39, xxii. 16; Rom. vi. 1-4; 1 Cor. x. 1-10, xii. 12-27; Gal. iii. 27; Eph. v. 25, 26; Col. ii. 12; Titus iii. 5; 1 Peter iii. 21.

members of the Church invisible, may “ fall into grievous sin ” ; but, according to the same authorities, only those who are not truly regenerate, and therefore not truly members of the invisible Church, are “ liable to be cast away.”)

“ IV. Those who thus fall away are always assumed to fall from grace. They are never for a moment supposed to fall into sin because God has withheld grace from them.”

(Certainly ; but this does not touch the question how they found “ access into this grace wherein they stand.” The “ modern Evangelical,” who “ addresses the sinner as one who sins because God has withheld grace from him,” is a mere imagination of the writer’s brain.)

“ V. In no case are baptized Christians called upon to become regenerate. They are called to repent, to turn to God, to cleanse their hands, to purify their hearts ; never to become regenerate.”

(No ; because on the theory of Scripture and the Reformed Churches they have believed before Baptism, and are by faith regenerate. They are urged, however, to “ make their calling and election sure.”)

It is plain that of these five points the first two are

the ones of fundamental importance. The others are illustrative of the position which these, and especially the first, are to establish. Mr. Sadler appeals to Scripture for proof of the assertion that these persons, after Baptism, “are now regenerate.”

If you will now examine those passages, bearing in mind what it is they are quoted to prove, namely, that Baptism regenerates, you must admit that neither singly nor collectively do they furnish the required proof.

In the first place, what is asserted is that in these passages “Christ or His Apostles connect Salvation or Regeneration with Baptism.” Admitting—though it is by no means certain in regard to all of them—that all of these passages do refer to Baptism, we may classify them according to the grace with which they appear to connect the rite.

Two (John iii. 3-5; Titus iii. 5) connect Regeneration (and renewal) with water and the Holy Spirit. I will deal with these later.

Three (Acts ii. 38, xxii. 16; Eph. v. 26) connect Baptism with the remission of sins.

The first of these passages is the only one in which there is even a semblance of a causal connection between Baptism and a specific grace, “the remission of sins.” But the summons to be baptized is plainly connected with, and dependent on, the summons to

“repent.” The remission of sins is not represented as originating in Baptism, but in the repentance which precedes it. So that, as indeed Mr. Sadler himself frankly acknowledges, “Remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Ghost are made to depend upon repentance joined with Baptism.” A further condition is probably to be inferred from the unusual phrase, “be baptized upon the name of Jesus Christ,” literally, “on the ground of the Name,”<sup>1</sup> so that this Name represented the contents of the confession on the ground of which they were baptized.

From the second passage in the Acts (“Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins”) it might be inferred that Baptism is the means “in the use of which” God “formally imparts” the washing away of sin. That I have no desire to deny. But who will maintain that not until Ananias had baptized him, three days after the great experience on the way to Damascus, did Paul receive forgiveness of sin? He had acknowledged Christ as “Lord”; he had made full submission and had “not been disobedient to the heavenly vision”; and he had received his Commission, “I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in which I

<sup>1</sup> Holtzmann, in the *Handcommentar, ad. loc.*

will appear unto thee.” St. Paul described the contents of that experience as God revealing His Son in him. However important his Baptism was as the formal declaration of what had happened, who dare say that upon his Baptism depended St. Paul’s participation in the saving grace of Christ?

In the third passage of this group (Eph. v. 26) our Lord is said to cleanse and sanctify the Church “with the washing of water by the word.” Here, whatever be the meaning of the much-discussed phrase, “by the word,” the cleansing is evidently ascribed to something else besides the mere rite of Baptism. This may be taken with many good commentators to refer to “the Gospel or the preached word taught preliminary to baptism,” or it may be otherwise interpreted; but we cannot ascribe to “the word” any subordinate function in the cleansing of the Church in face of our Lord’s pregnant saying: “Now ye are clean through the word that I have spoken unto you.”

In no one of these passages, therefore, is Baptism connected with the remission or washing away of sin as the sole or the primary cause.

Three other passages appear to “connect” Baptism with “Salvation.” The first is Mark xvi. 16 (“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be damned”). But it would be hard to put Scripture to stranger use than to make

this text support Baptismal Regeneration. For, in the first place, it clearly makes Faith the antecedent of Baptism ; and, in the second place, we have in the latter clause the pointed omission of all reference to Baptism, which is surely very significant. The utmost that could be made of the first clause, even if it stood alone, would be that Baptism is as necessary to salvation as faith ; but taken in conjunction with the second clause, it loses even this force. “ Had it been followed up by the declaration, ‘ He that believeth not and is not baptized shall be damned,’ the Popish doctrine might have been regarded as established. But when we find that our Saviour, in so very marked and pointed a manner, dropped all reference to baptism in stating the converse of His first declaration, and connected condemnation only with the want of faith, the conviction is forced upon us that He did so for the express purpose of indicating that He did not intend to teach that there was an invariable connection between Salvation and Baptism, though there certainly was between salvation and faith. And He was careful to say nothing that might lead men to believe that the want of Baptism excluded men from the kingdom of heaven.”<sup>1</sup> In fact, the authoritative statement of which you are in search to

<sup>1</sup> Cunningham, *Historical Theology*, ii. 138.

establish Baptismal Regeneration is not this, but rather, “ He that is baptized shall be saved ; he that is not baptized shall be damned.” That, however, you cannot find.

In the second passage of this group (Titus iii. 5), though Baptism is referred to, it is not specified as the single cause of Regeneration. In this case the subjective condition, faith, is passed over, but a second objective condition is emphasized, the operation of the Holy Ghost. It would take too long to go minutely into the exegesis of the text, which is far from easy. But the choice lies between regarding “ the laver of regeneration ” and the “ renewing of the Holy Ghost ” as co-ordinate clauses and co-ordinate ideas, and regarding “ regeneration and renewal ” as together the result of the operation of the Spirit and “ regeneration and renewal of (*i.e.* by) the Spirit ” as connected in some way not here defined with the laver of Baptism. In the first case you have a laver of Regeneration whose saving efficacy is incomplete without the “ renewing of the Holy Ghost.” As Dean Alford says : “ Let us take care that we know and bear in mind what ‘ Baptism ’ means ; not the mere ecclesiastical act, not the mere fact of reception by that act among God’s professing people, but that completed by the Divine act, manifested by the operation of the Holy Ghost in the heart and through the life.”

In the second case, all that is established is some connection between Baptism and salvation, whereas the whole question at issue is, "What is the nature of that connection?" What that connection is Mr. Sadler "does not stop to inquire." And yet his thesis is that the connection is an invariable one, that it is, in fact, a causal one. If this passage does not help him to prove that, it does not help him at all.

In the third passage (1 Peter iii. 22) we are told "the like figure whereunto, even Baptism, doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." Here, plainly, the value of the external act is minimized, if not denied, and attention is firmly directed to the "answer of a good conscience," or, rather, to the "seeking after God on the part of a good conscience," the inward attitude of the recipient, as that which gives Baptism its significance and, indeed, its validity.

Two more passages refer to Baptism as representing a mystical burial with Christ. "Therefore we are buried with Him by Baptism into death" (Rom. vi. 4). "Buried with Him in Baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead" (Col. ii. 12). This is, of course, a metaphorical interpretation of the actual experience of Baptism by immersion; and no

one will deny the beauty of the picture or its legitimacy as an interpretation of Christian experience. But it depends for its validity on the mystical union between Christ and—whom? Surely between Christ and the believer, the man who had been led by his faith to obey Christ's command to be baptized, and by the same faith was already before Baptism united to his Lord. The meaning of such passages can only be understood in view of what was the normal procedure leading up to Baptism. Now that undoubtedly was preaching leading to repentance and faith, then to confession of Jesus as the Lord, and then to Baptism. What took place outwardly, symbolically, I might say pictorially, in Baptism had in all these cases taken place internally and spiritually before the rite of Baptism was administered. The use which St. Paul makes of it in these passages only serves to show what intense symbolic meaning attached to the rite as then administered. It set forth with singular vividness the death to sin and resurrection to righteousness which were involved in the regeneration of the Holy Ghost. But that had taken place already.

The same considerations must be kept in view in interpreting two other passages: "By one spirit we are all baptized into one body" (1 Cor. xii. 13); "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Gal. iii. 27). If, as we are quite pre-

pared to admit, Baptism is the normal consummation and the appointed seal of conversion, it was only natural that New Testament writers should ascribe to the public and consummating rite anything that properly belongs to the whole process, or properly arises out of it. But what you seek to do is to take a portion of that whole (and that the external and least important part) and make it stand for the entire process. Whether or not infants were baptized in the period covered by the New Testament, it is certain that the Apostles in their references to Baptism were guided by the normal case of adult Baptism, in which those who were "baptized into Christ" had first confessed Him as Lord, repenting of their sins.

There remains the famous passage John iii. 3-5, to which Mr. Sadler devotes a minute examination. I fear an equally minute examination of his inferences from it would only be wearisome ; many of the things he states are true ; some are obvious ; and he has a way of stating obvious and admitted truths as if they were recognised and secured only by those in whose name he speaks. For instance, his conclusion, that "a supernatural birth" is required for entrance into the Church, is simply a commonplace of Reformed theology ; only we should trace it not to baptism alone but to the operation of the Spirit which in all normal cases is sealed by Baptism. We should also

agree that our Lord here alludes to some deep mystery, “deeper (I should not say ‘far deeper’) than any which attaches to the ordinary working of the Spirit on the heart in convincing it of sin or of the need of Christ’s righteousness.” For there can be no deeper mystery than the creation of life, the bringing to birth of “a new creature”; and it is no less than this that we all ascribe to the working of the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, Protestants do not say, as Mr. Sadler suggests they do, that to be “born again” is synonymous with “conversion” or “repentance,” or even with “a new heart.” We say that these are elements in the process of regeneration which even in its most instantaneous form is capable of analysis into these and other elements, but is best described as a whole by this name of Regeneration.

With regard to this passage it has been maintained by many Protestant scholars of high repute, including John Calvin, that in John iii. 3-5 our Lord is not referring to Baptism at all. And although, on the other hand, many other good scholars think that this negative assertion cannot be maintained, it is equally difficult to prove with certainty that the water of which our Lord speaks was intended by Him to describe the outward ordinance of Baptism.

But even supposing this were certain, what does the passage prove? It proves the necessity of Baptism

with water and the Spirit. It does not prove what you assert that every Baptism with water is a Baptism with the Spirit also. The necessity it describes may be absolute, or it may be relative. It may be absolute as regards one element, the Spirit, and relative as regards the water. And this was, in fact, the interpretation put upon the words by the Church of the first centuries, when it was held universally that a catechumen who was martyred before Baptism was a member of Christ, *i.e.* by the Baptism of the Spirit, and held by some that even without martyrdom the will to suffer validly supplied the want of Baptism by water.<sup>1</sup>

The true meaning of this passage will be best understood when we take in connection with it the preaching of John the Baptist and his proclamation concerning Jesus. "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but He that cometh after me is mightier than I: . . . He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." Jesus gathers up into the conditions of entrance into His kingdom the one laid down by His forerunner, while His own sacrifice was to secure the fulfilment of that further condition which the Baptist foresaw but could not provide. He lays down as the condition of Regenera-

<sup>1</sup> So St. Ambrose. See Plummer in *Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible*, ii. 244.

tion, and so of entrance into His kingdom, an experience which is single but not simple ; it is capable of analysis into two parts. On the one hand it has its human side, corresponding to the Baptism of John following on repentance. On the other hand it has now its Divine side, in which the response of faith to the message of the Gospel is followed by the Spirit-baptism creating new life, a new heart, a new creature. There were cases in which the two parts of this experience were separated. The centurion, Cornelius, for example, received first the Baptism of the Spirit, and then, after an interval, the Baptism of water, the Apostle Peter justifying his Baptism by an appeal to this very utterance of the Baptist. Such cases are important as showing that there is not an invariable relation between the different elements of Baptism ; but if our Lord does refer to Baptism in this text, He teaches us that normally the two parts of the experience coincide, man's repentance and God's grace, man's faith and the Regeneration of the Spirit ; and also that normally the outward expression of repentance and obedience in baptism coincides with the consummation of the Spirit's operation in regeneration.

Our examination of the passages of Scripture on which Mr. Sadler relies leads to the following results : There are a number of passages in the New Testa-

ment in which a connection is referred to between Baptism on the one hand, and salvation, or remission of sins, or Regeneration, on the other.

But in no one of these passages does Baptism stand alone. It is always conjoined with some other term ; we find water and Spirit, faith and Baptism, repentance and Baptism, Baptism and the seeking of a good conscience, “the washing of water by the word.”

Whatever, therefore, may be by you ascribed to Baptism, on the ground of Scripture, is by Scripture ascribed to Baptism and something else. Unless you have some means of securing or guaranteeing the fulfilment of both conditions, you have no assurance that any of the results will follow which in Scripture are assigned to Baptism and another factor. In other words, the evidence you produce from Scripture does not prove Regeneration through the *opus operatum* of Baptism.

But I must remind you that the Scriptural evidence regarding Baptismal Regeneration is not exhausted when we have examined that which bears directly upon Baptism. We have still to look at what Scripture may have to say about Regeneration. And here you will find a number of passages to be reckoned with which the writers on your side too persistently ignore. I refer to several striking passages where Regeneration is described, and the instrument which effects it is

specified, and yet there is no mention whatever of Baptism.

Consider, for example, John i. 12, 13: “As many as received Him to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believed on His name: which were not born of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

You will not deny that “Regeneration” and this “power to become the sons of God” describe the same experience of saving grace. To whom then is it granted? Not to them who accept Baptism, but to “them that believe on His name.” On what ground are they received into the new sonship? Emphatically not on the ground of anything which they or others may will or do. All human agency is excluded, even that of a baptizer. They are born “not of the will of man, but of God.” With this clear statement your doctrine seems to stand in direct contradiction. When a priest baptizes an unconscious infant of parents who are, it may be, notoriously indifferent to religion, and then pronounces “this child regenerate,” is it not conspicuously the will of man and that alone which comes into play? Or if he claims that his will to baptize involves God’s will to regenerate, have you not replaced the religion of Christ by magic?

Again, the New Testament does in more than one place specify the outward efficient cause or instrument

of Regeneration ; and it is not Baptism. It is the Word of God.

“Born again,” says St. Peter (1 Peter i. 23) “not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible by the Word of God.” St. Paul traced the same change in his converts to the preaching of the Gospel : “In Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel” (1 Cor. iv. 15). And St. James says still more emphatically : “Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth.”

If there is anything in these passages more remarkable than the plainness with which they set forth the Word of God as the instrument of Regeneration, it is their silence respecting Baptism. How do you explain this silence ? If Baptism were so all-essential to salvation, as you assert, how comes it that in so many passages where salvation is described all reference to Baptism is omitted ?

Your account of Baptism is not Scriptural because it takes no account of passages such as these, while the passages you rely on fail to prove your case.



## THE MEANING OF BAPTISM

“In the old dispensation union with Israel was the condition of life : in the new, union with Christ.”—WESTCOTT.

“The water can do no more than common water. The words can do no more than common words. But the whole Baptism, water and words together, is what Christ Himself appointed as the way of entrance into the kingdom of God. God by it formally acknowledges the child as His own, gives him by it a right and title to enter on all the benefits which belong to His children. Henceforth the child, as he grows up, may look back to his baptism and take comfort from it in knowing that he is no stranger to Almighty God in heaven above.”—HORT.

## VII

### THE MEANING OF BAPTISM

You ask—and it is a very pertinent question—how then, if Baptismal Regeneration cannot be proved out of Scripture, and if the silence of Scripture in many places is so eloquent against it, how comes it that the doctrine has been held by so large a section of the Christian Church, and over so long a period? The answer is both interesting in itself and will throw further light on this whole matter.

But I must first point out that your teachers exaggerate if they speak of the testimony even of the Fathers as universally in favour of this theory. When Archbishop Cranmer said: “All that be washed with water be not washed with the Holy Ghost,” he was practically quoting Origen, who says, “Not all who are bathed in water are forthwith bathed in the Holy Spirit.” Theodoret was no better than a ‘Protestant’ when he said, “Grace sometimes precedes the Sacrament, sometimes follows it, and sometimes does not

even follow it.” And Augustine is even more emphatic. “Outward Baptism may be administered where inward conversion of the heart is wanting; and, on the other hand, inward conversion of the heart may exist, where outward Baptism has never been received.”

And once more, the same Father, in his Commentary on Psalm lxxvii., expressly guards against the theory of an invariable connection between the Sacrament and the grace it signifies. “All drank the same spiritual drink, but not with all was God well pleased; and when the Sacraments were all common, the grace was not common to all which constitutes the virtue of the Sacraments. So also now . . . the laver of Regeneration is common to all who are baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; but the grace itself, of which they are Sacraments, and by which the members of the body of Christ are regenerated with their Head, is not common to all.”

Quotations like these might be multiplied almost indefinitely, but I must not forget that your appeal is to Scripture, and you want to know how those who also made this appeal came to be led into this theory.

The explanation is a very simple one. It is found in the increasing prevalence, after the middle of the second century, of infant Baptism. In New Testa-

ment times Baptism, as most commonly administered, was the Baptism of adults. Infant Baptism was by comparison rare. Thus the Baptism which New Testament writers have in view is that form of it which in their experience was the common one, the Baptism of grown men and women. Any explanation these writers may give of the rite, its significance or value, is given with adult Baptism alone in view. In all such cases it was possible to presuppose some knowledge of the Gospel, repentance and faith ; and, in fact, these things are always presupposed. And this is to be borne in mind in interpreting all references to Baptism in the Epistles.

The normal case of admission to the Church of the first century was that of a grown man “converted” through the preaching of the Apostles. That this was so is plain both from the nature of the case and from the evidence of the Acts.

When the Ethiopian eunuch, to whom Philip had preached Jesus, asked, “What doth hinder me to be baptized ?” the Evangelist replied, “If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest”; and on the ground of the confession, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God,” he was baptized. And so, in general, we are told of the three thousand who responded to St. Peter’s summons to repentance, that “they who gladly received his word were baptized”; and concern-

ing the Corinthians, that “many hearing believed, and were baptized.”

This being the normal case at the time, it is natural that the New Testament writers should state their doctrine of Baptism in terms corresponding to the Baptism of adults; that is to say, on the assumption that those who received it were already qualified by repentance and faith. And it is important to bear in mind that the writers and confessions of the Reformation period also commonly proceed on the same assumption. It is adult Baptism that they have in view.

But in the course of the second century the Baptism of infants, not unknown within the New Testament, became increasingly common. The Christian Family began to assert its reality as a unit in God’s dealing with men alongside the individual. The baptism of adult converts became more rare within the area that had been Christianized. The cases were reversed. The Baptism of infants became the common and the normal thing.

Now, this change rendered inevitable some modification of the theory of Baptism. That assumption of repentance and faith in the recipient which had been universal in the case of adults was not possible in the case of infants. And yet the Church felt that there was a positive blessing in the Sacrament which belonged even to infant children of believers, and must

not be withheld from them. The practice is one capable of abundant justification from Scripture. Unfortunately the theory by which it came to be justified, the theory of Baptismal Regeneration, is, as we have seen, neither Scriptural nor true. The time was not propitious for the development of a theory of Baptism which should bring the practice of baptizing infants into harmony with the whole teaching of God's Word. The Apostles had passed away. The Church was occupied with other questions of a more pressing kind. There was much to predispose men towards a theory which cut the knot. It was easy. It was at least congenial to certain ideas which were widely current outside the Christian Church. It harmonized with the growing inclination to ascribe supernatural powers to a certain class of men, and supernatural efficacy to certain rites and actions.

The mistake made by certain influential teachers of the early Catholic Church, and now repeated by that school in the English Church to which you belong, consists in combining in the Baptism of infants two elements which can only be properly combined in the Baptism of adults—the rite of initiation and the seal of Regeneration.

As a rite of initiation Baptism looks forward to the future. It signifies the reception of the baptized into a certain community—in the case of Christian Bap-

tism, the community of the visible Church. It is on man's side a claim, and on God's side a solemn granting of the claim, that he shall stand under the covenant of grace.

Now when the early Church extended the privilege of Baptism to infants, it had good grounds for what it did in so far as Baptism conferred this public initiation. It acted on the guiding analogy of circumcision, the Old Testament rite of initiation. If Jewish children were by birth partakers of the benefits of the former covenant, Christian children must be no less really partakers of the benefits of the New one. And if their part in that covenant was sealed to the one class by the rite of circumcision, who could forbid that to the other it should be sealed by Baptism? The Apostle declares that the children even of one believing parent are "holy," that is, under the covenant of Divine grace in Jesus Christ. They were by birth members of the household of faith, and the Church by baptizing them sealed and signified this spiritual fact in an outward and visible way.

In this manner the Church does full justice to that "great Church principle," the principle of solidarity which Mr. Sadler expounds in his chapter on "The Visible Church." Unfortunately he states the principle in a one-sided way, and makes such an application of it as leads him into error.

It is perfectly true that through a great part of the Old Testament we see God dealing with men as a body, as a family, a tribe, a nation, that “God saves men not only by making them personally and individually religious, but by joining them together in a Church or community.” But you must not forget, as Mr. Sadler tends to do, the “not only.” It is perfectly true that the Israelite entered at birth upon the inheritance of God’s favour, God’s covenant, which belonged to his nation ; that his crowning duty was to keep himself in fellowship with his people by fulfilling the conditions of the covenant, his worst punishment to be “cut off.” For many generations God was recognised as dealing with the individual mainly through the community. To this principle the Church, as we have seen, does full justice in infant Baptism.

But we must not forget that this represents only one side of even the Old Testament teaching regarding God’s way of dealing with men, that He does deal with them also as individuals, and that they are conscious of their responsibility direct to Him and independently of the community. This is seen in the patriarchal stories, and especially in the whole history of Abraham. It is seen also even in the period when the “Church principle” was most dominant, in the utterances of prophets and psalmists. Even when we have allowed for a number of possible cases in

which the Psalmist speaks for the community, there remain countless others in which he can only be speaking for himself and of himself to God. “Let them speak in the name of the community as often as they will, from their very depths there bubbles up a vigorous spring of individual piety, of a blissful intercourse of the individual soul with God.”<sup>1</sup>

But it is especially towards the end of the Old Testament revelation that we see this “Church principle” countered by the converse principle of individualism. We see it in Isaiah’s doctrine of the “remnant,” the germ of the later doctrine of the Church invisible; but especially in the experience and the message of Jeremiah. In this great prophet the individual consciousness of direct relation to God reaches its full development, and his successor Ezekiel establishes the charter of individualism when he sets aside the old proverb, “The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge,” and substitutes for the principle of corporate responsibility its complement, “All souls are mine. The soul that sinneth, *it* shall die.”

Thus the Old Testament shows us not one but two principles of Divine dealing with men, and it shows them apparently at issue with one another. It is, in

<sup>1</sup> Budde, *The Religion of Israel to the Exile*, p. 198.

fact, the same two principles which are at issue in the present controversy. Extreme Catholicism over-emphasizes the one, extreme Protestantism over-emphasizes the other. While we deny neither, you practically ignore one. But we shall only hold the truth by grasping both, for both are harmonized in the revealed mind and Word of God.

The Church of the West was guided by a true insight when it not only distinguished Baptism from Confirmation, but put an increasing interval between the two rites. And your Church of to-day seems to me to be singularly misled when it overlooks the two stages of Christian privilege so clearly set forth in its Liturgy, and crushes into the moment of Baptism what is so completely provided for in the double ordinance of Baptism and Confirmation, with the interval of instruction which separates them.

For while Baptism signifies the admission of a child to the visible Church of Christ, and secures to it its birthright in the Christian community, which belongs to it on the ground of the faith of its parents, Confirmation, or whatever other ordinance of admission to the privileges of mature membership may take its place, comes as a seal of its own personal faith in Christ, and therefore of the Regeneration accomplished by the Holy Spirit.

There cannot be any facts regarding a child born into

a Christian family of more transcending importance than these, that it is born into a world for which Christ has died, and into the circle of those who themselves look to Christ as their Saviour. The “promise” is not only to themselves, but “to their children.” And in the Sacrament God meets these children at the very threshold of their life with a solemn seal of these promises, an assurance that the things claimed for them by the faith of their parents are really theirs, to be continuously appropriated with the growth of their growth and the development of their consciousness. “The efficacy of Baptism is not tied to that moment of time wherein it is administered.” That is the great principle laid down by the Reformation confessions, and held by Protestants. Its effects, or the effects of that which it symbolizes (it is not possible for us to distinguish these), are seen in the continuous operation of the Holy Spirit, enlightening and cleansing, quickening the apprehension of God, convincing of the need of salvation and a Saviour, eliciting faith, confirming it with corresponding grace, until the child, come to maturity, and regenerate by a moral not a magical process, enters on the full possession of his inheritance in Christ. Of this Confirmation or some corresponding ceremony may be the symbol.

A child who has been baptized and taught the meaning of baptism can fall out of the covenant relation

with God only by his own act and will. He has not to be exhorted to enter that relation, but to abide in it. But he cannot abide in it on the ground of his Baptism without, sooner or later, desiring to make it his by personal faith. When thus he turns with conscious faith to Christ, the grace which has been his since Baptism finds its consummation in Regeneration and renewal. Thus, while Baptism signs and seals "the benefits of the new covenant," it does also apply them, in the sense that Baptism marks the point where their application begins, an application which, when accompanied by appropriation on the human side, issues in Regeneration.

This is the grace of Baptism when it is not preceded by repentance and personal faith. But to say that Baptism regenerates is true neither to Scripture nor to experience.



## THE LORD'S SUPPER

“Nam ego ipse, quoties hac de re sermo est, ubi omnia dicere conatus sum, parum adhuc mihi pro ejus dignitate dixisse videor.”—**CALVIN.**

## VIII

### THE LORD'S SUPPER

OUR Blessed Lord, on the night before His death, gathered His disciples round Him at supper, and, having taken bread and blessed it, He brake it and gave it to them, saying, "Take, eat ; this is My body." Then He did likewise with a cup of wine, saying, "This is the new covenant, in My blood." This simple ceremony He commanded them to repeat : "This do in remembrance of Me." And this commandment has been so generally obeyed that there is no other feature of Christianity which so nearly fulfils the condition that it is observed "everywhere, always and by all" believers.

This practice of meeting together to eat bread and drink wine in commemoration of our Saviour has been in all ages the most distinctive and the most nearly universal mark of the Catholic Church. It is hallowed for each of us by countless individual associations, and for us all by the accumulated experience of earlier generations, who have found in this observance a gate-

way into the unseen, a means of ineffable communion with their Lord. It is hallowed further by that discourse which after its first institution He pronounced, expounding with matchless tenderness the relations of the disciples to Himself and to one another.

In that discourse He specially insisted on the unity of the disciples as the fruit of their union with Him, and the evidence by which they would impress and convert an unbelieving world. He pointed to the secret of this unity, and the method of their victory in the commandment that “they should love one another.” It is the bitterest irony of Christian history, and must be to every true Christian a cause of profound sorrow that this rite, intended and calculated to be both a mark and a means of unity, has been, and still is, the very centre of controversy and a symbol of dissension. I earnestly wish it were possible to leave this subject out of our discussion. But it is just here that the different conceptions of religion, of man’s relation to God, which distinguish the Roman from the Protestant system, appear in sharpest contrast ; and it is here that we have the best opportunity of estimating their respective claims on the principle, “By their fruits ye shall know them.” As the doctrines and practices which gathered round the Mass were the most pernicious of the mediæval corruptions of Christianity, so the recovery of the Lord’s Supper in its simplicity, its fulness and all

the spiritual depth of its meaning was the greatest outward achievement of the Reformation. The Lord's Supper, as then restored, has now to be defended as the most precious outward privilege of the Reformed Church. And in its defence it may be necessary to say hard things (but I hope not bitter things) of the opposing doctrines which threaten its purity.

But, here again, let us begin by recognising those things whereon we are agreed.

As touching the Lord's Supper, we are all agreed in holding it to be a Sacrament, and of perpetual obligation in the Church.

We agree in holding that the due use and the due administration of this Sacrament form one of the marks of the true Catholic Church.

Also, that it cannot be neglected by the individual, except with grievous loss and danger.

We agree, further, in confining participation in this Sacrament to adult members of the Church, those who have made profession of their faith in Christ; in admitting women as well as men to be partakers; in requiring that the Sacrament shall be administered by a duly appointed minister.

And, as touching the meaning of the ordinance, we are agreed in recognising it as a solemn commemoration of our Lord's death and passion, as a symbol of the intimate union of all those who believe in Him,

and as a peculiarly impressive acknowledgment of their engagement to be His.

I have been careful not to overstate the significance assigned to the Lord's Supper by all Protestant Churches, for I wish really to find the ground that is common to all ; and there are some, to whom I would not like to deny the title of Evangelical Protestant, who might not go farther.

As a matter of fact most Evangelical Protestants do go considerably farther in the significance they attach to the Sacrament, and would agree with you in recognising the deeper mystery of Christ's self-communication to His disciples through the Supper—His real spiritual presence in the Sacrament.

But, I ask myself, what right have you or I to deny our fellowship, or the full standing of members of Christ and of His Church to men or to Churches on the ground that they do not find in this Sacrament all the significance or grace that we find. If they are cautious, if they are shy, if they are inclined to make less of the Sacrament than we think there is Scripture warrant for doing, their caution is justified and explained by the proved dangers of the other extreme. Only one who was ignorant of history or indifferent to the moral side of Christianity could fail to sympathize with those who, in shrinking back from error on this subject, have shrunk back too far within the frontiers

of truth. Of what can we accuse even those who regard the Sacrament as "merely a memorial" that in itself should disqualify them as members of the Catholic Church? They are obedient to our Lord's command. They observe the ordinance of breaking bread and drinking wine "in remembrance" of Him. They hold themselves pledged thereby to a life of dependence on His grace and obedience to His word. Granting that their apprehension of the Sacrament falls short of all its possible significance, is that any sufficient reason for treating them as outside the household of faith? We cannot say that their view is false. It is part of our own. We cannot say it is not Scriptural. It depends on a too literal interpretation of some of our Lord's language, as transubstantiation depends on a too literal interpretation of others of His words. Can we un-Church them for that? It is not for their sakes I plead who hold less, but for our own who hold more, lest we fall into the sin of schism by separating ourselves, even in sympathy, from those who are not separated from Christ, by erecting into a difference in kind what is only a difference in degree.

I am convinced that we shall approach this subject in harmony with the spirit of our Lord only if we determine to see in the humble and reverent observance of the Lord's Supper with the intention of

“showing forth His death” the common demonstrative action of the Universal Church, not so much differentiating those who on other essentials are agreed as uniting those who otherwise, on non-essentials, may differ.

Having said this much, I am prepared to agree with Mr. Sadler, and with you, I hope, on two points of great importance, namely in his emphatic repudiation of the doctrine of transubstantiation, and in his earnest contention that the Lord’s Supper is something more than “a mere figure,” that in it there is in fact conferred a positive spiritual grace and benefit.

If, therefore, you follow Mr. Sadler, you definitely exclude two of the four possible ways of explaining our Lord’s words and the nature of the Sacrament. You exclude one, the Socinian view, on the ground that it is defective ; the other, the theory of transubstantiation, on the ground of excess.

Let us keep in mind the four possible interpretations which are clearly distinguishable from one another. They are these :

1. The Words of Institution are wholly figurative, and have no connection with the discourse in John vi., in which Christ offers Himself as the Bread from heaven, the necessary food of man.

The elements are mere or “naked” signs.

The purpose of the rite is merely to commemorate

the passion of our Lord, “to show forth His death until He come.” It may serve also, though this does not appear in the dogmatic statements of the doctrine, to display the unity of believers with one another and to proclaim their allegiance to Christ.

This is commonly called the Zwinglian view. But the title is inaccurate. The correct name for it is Socinian.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I wish you would persuade your friends, were it only for the sake of English scholarship, to drop the absurd practice of calling this theory by the name of Zwingli. The passages in his works where he seems to adopt a theory of “mere commemoration” owe this appearance to the fact that he is earnestly contending against the Tridentine doctrine of the Mass. As he says : “ If I have called this a commemoration, I have done so in order to controvert the opinion of those who make of it a sacrifice.” On the other hand, when he came to deal with the other extreme, or when he was stating his own full doctrine, his language was far removed from “Zwinglianism.” In his exposition of the Eighteenth Article he says : “ Here let simple readers understand that we do not here discuss the question whether the Body and Blood of Christ are eaten and drunk (for of that no Christian has any doubt).” In the prayer which he wrote for the new Directory these phrases occur : “ In like manner we believe that He has offered Himself as food for the soul under the forms of bread and wine, in order that the contemplation of His Godhead may never be destroyed. . . . Grant that we also, when we eat His flesh and drink His blood . . . .” And in his Confession addressed to King Francis : “ We believe that Christ is

2. The words are figurative, but figurative of a real and necessary element in Christian experience, namely, the feeding of the soul upon Christ. The rite and the discourse in John vi. mutually illustrate one another.

The elements being duly set apart with thanksgiving and with prayer to the Holy Spirit, represent to the Church, that is to the community of believers, the body and blood of Christ.

They are received as such by those who believe, and for them they have the virtue or effect which our Lord connects with His “flesh” and His “blood.”

The purpose of the rite is :

(a) To commemorate our Lord’s death, showing it forth to ourselves and to the world.

(b) To receive from Christ a communication of Himself so full and so complete that it can be described as a feeding on His flesh.

(c) To seal in the most solemn way the unity of the

truly present in the Lord’s Supper ; yea, that there is no Communion without such presence. . . . We believe that the true body of Christ is eaten in the Communion, not in a gross and carnal manner, but in a spiritual and sacramental manner, by the religious believing and pious heart.” Weigh these passages and say whether it is right to pin the name of Zwingli to the theory of mere commemoration. See *Expositor*, 1901, p. 161 ff.

Church as a Family of God, partaking of one heavenly food.

This is the doctrine of the Protestant Confessions (apart from those of the Lutheran Church which, however, only differ from this by excess). It is, as I believe, the doctrine of the Church of England expressed alike in its formularies and by its great divines.

It is loosely and somewhat mischievously described as Receptionism or Virtualism.

3. The Words of Institution are to be taken literally. Being pronounced over the elements by a duly (*i.e.* episcopally) ordained priest, they have the effect of causing the bread and wine to "become" the body and blood of Christ, not only in a sacramental sense and to those who by faith partake, but "objectively," that is apart from any participation and apart from any qualification in those who may partake.

At the same time the elements do not cease to be bread and wine.

The purpose of the rite is to commemorate the death of Christ "before man and God," but with special and almost exclusive emphasis on the commemoration before God, in such a way as to plead the sacrifice of Christ upon the Cross.

Beside this the purpose of communion tends to fall into the background, but it is not lost sight of. For

the consecrated Bread conveys to the recipient heavenly food of such ineffable value that, according to some, it secures his salvation, and without it salvation is precarious, if not impossible.

This view may be described as the Anglo-Catholic one. Many who do not hold it themselves do nevertheless claim tolerance for it within the Church of England. It is difficult to define, partly because it has never been put forth with authority, and partly because in certain individuals it shades off into transubstantiation.

4. The words are to be taken with absolute literalness. Being pronounced by a duly ordained (*i.e.* Roman) priest, they have the effect of transforming the elements into the veritable body and blood of Christ. They cease to be bread and wine. Each element by itself becomes the whole Christ (and thus it is sufficient to communicate the laity in one element alone).

The rite “confers the grace of the Sacrament on all those who do not put an obstacle in the way”; and as neither unconsciousness nor indifference is technically an obstacle, the grace of the Sacrament is practically conveyed, as the Council of Trent declared it to be, “*ex opere operato*,” that is by the mere performance of the rite.

The conception of the Sacrament as a Communion

falls still more into the background. The faithful are not expected to communicate more than a few times in the year. The “Mass” is, above all, a sacrifice, not merely commemorative, but propitiatory. “In the Mass there is offered to God a true, proper and propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead.”<sup>1</sup>

This is properly called the theory of transubstantiation.

The first and the last of these theories are, as I have said, emphatically rejected by Mr. Sadler, as, until quite lately, both alike have been rejected, even with vehemence, by all who claimed to speak for the Church of England.

But there can be no doubt that a tendency has manifested itself of late within the Church of England at least to coquet with the doctrine of transubstantiation, which has been so unanimously rejected by all the great English Fathers and divines.

It may be useful, therefore, to recall the grounds on which Protestants of all shades and schools have rejected this doctrine of transubstantiation.

<sup>1</sup> Thus the Creed of Pope Pius IV. ; and to the same effect the Canons of the Council of Trent, sess. xxii. cap. 2, “ If any man shall say that in the Mass there is not offered to God a true and proper sacrifice, or that what is offered is nothing else than Christ given to be eaten, let him be anathema.”

The most serious objection to it is that it cannot be proved. This doctrine, which makes the most tremendous claim on human credence, asserting that man can make God ; that a priest can at his will and pleasure repeat the miracle of the Incarnation ; that in defiance of all the testimony of sight, taste, and touch bread is not bread, but the living Christ—this amazing doctrine, against which all reason and experience protest, not only cannot be demonstrated, but cannot even be made probable by any evidence from Scripture, by any appeal to faith.

Those who maintain this doctrine do of course bring forward other collateral evidence ; but all other so-called evidence that may be adduced is entirely subordinate to the one central proof which they profess to find in our Lord's words, “This is My body.” The doctrine of transubstantiation rests on the assertion that when Jesus used these words in reference to the bread He held in His hand, He meant, and the Apostles understood Him to mean, that actually and literally the bread *was* His body.

Those who deny that this meaning is either necessary or possible are overwhelmed with contumely as disloyal to their Master, as denying that He “meant what He said,” as “setting themselves up to be more spiritual than He !”

Not only by Romanists defending transubstantia-

tion, but by Anglo-Catholics urging their hybrid theory, we are addressed as wilfully and culpably blind to the only possible meaning of the words. Now I ask you, is this reasonable? Is not this a case of abuse substituted for argument? Is not another interpretation of our Lord's words possible, probable, nay, certain?

*Possible*, because consistent with a habit of speech as widespread as human language, the habit of connecting by the copula "is" two things which are not identical, but related, in some respect similar. When we say "the child is father of the man," do we talk nonsense, or do we use language which all thoughtful men recognise to be sensible, true, and "figurative"?

When a dying Mousquetaire touches the bandage on his brow and says, "C'est mon panache," does any one object that he is not speaking the truth? If we explain to a child the meaning of the words, could we be rightly accused of "explaining them away"?

But another interpretation of "is" becomes not only possible but probable in view of the fact that, even more than in other languages and literature, this habit prevails in the language and literature of the Jews. To take only two illustrations. In Exodus xii. 11 we have, "Thus shall ye eat it (the lamb) . . . It is the Lord's Passover"; where the lamb plainly not "is," but "represents," or "suggests," or

in some intimate way is connected with, the Lord's Passover. Again, when St. Paul says (Gal. iv. 25), "This Hagar is Mount Sinai," he plainly uses in a figurative sense the very word *εστίν*, which we are told can only express *identity*.

But the probability is greatly increased by the fact that, more than any other teacher whose words have come down to us, Jesus made use of this manner of conveying truth, and particularly truth about Himself. The Evangelist expressly drew attention to this feature in His teaching, "Without a parable spake He not unto them." And this was His method not only in those cases where we are distinctly told that "He spake a parable unto them," but in many other cases where there is no such sign-post of a metaphor. We speak of the "Parable of the Prodigal Son," of the "Parable of the Unjust Steward," and of many other like them, where there is not a word in the text to show that they were parables. That is to say, we exercise our own judgment in deciding in which passages our Lord is to be understood as speaking "figuratively" and when He is to be taken literally.

Is it not rather ridiculous then, as well as flagrantly unfair, to charge us with "Protestant Jesuitry and casuistry and shuffling and twisting and unreality,"<sup>1</sup> simply because in this case also we exercise the judg-

<sup>1</sup> Knox Little, *Sacerdotalism*, p. 170.

ment which in the other cases is exercised by all, because we maintain that here also our Lord used this habitual manner of speech, and *meant* not literally “This is,” but “This represents My body”?

I have shown that there is no *a priori* objection to such an understanding of His words: and there are several weighty reasons in its favour.

The first is that not only in His habit of teaching by parable, but in many striking expressions setting forth His relation to men, Jesus had prepared His Apostles for a figurative meaning in His words. Familiar examples at once occur to us: “I am the Vine, ye are the branches”; “I am the Door”; “I am the Good Shepherd.” Now the importance of such expressions lies not in their being exact parallels to “This is My body” (though they are certainly very close), but in this, that they show the constant habit of our Lord’s speech. In all these cases the relation expressed by what is a direct statement is not, after all, one of surface or objective identity, but one of inward moral or spiritual correspondence. Their true meaning is grasped only when we understand “am” by “represent”; and absolutely no reason can be shown why in the crucial Words of Institution also we should not understand “is” by “represents.”

The second is that this is the only possible meaning which could be attached to the words by the Apostles.

They saw Jesus before their eyes, their Master, living Man and Friend. When, holding bread in His hand, He said, “Take, eat, this is My body,” what else could they understand, familiar with His mode of speech, His actual physical form meeting their gaze—what else could they understand but “This represents My body”?

The third objection to a literal interpretation of the words arises from the strange variation of our Lord’s language when He comes to the cup.

There is, of course, notable variation between the reports we have received of His words at this stage. In St. Matthew and St. Mark we have concerning the cup, “This is My blood of the New Covenant”; in St. Luke and St. Paul, “This is the New Covenant in My blood.” Now the difference between these reports is of comparatively little importance, *if* our Lord’s language was figurative. The cup could *represent* either the New Covenant or the blood of the New Covenant, or it could *represent* both; but it cannot *be* both. If you insist on taking our Lord’s words literally, you must decide which of the two things the cup or the wine is—the covenant or the blood; and you must have some reason for your decision.<sup>1</sup> But when you have settled this difficulty,

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Sadler sees this difficulty afar off, and avoids it by

which is a serious one for all who insist on a literal interpretation, I want to know *what it is* which is the blood (or the covenant). According to our Lord's words it must be the "cup." He never mentions the wine. If you reply, "But He meant the wine," you give your case away, which depends "not on what He meant, but on what He said."

If you will be literal, you must be literal to the end.

If Jesus meant to identify the wine with His blood, and if the identification were of such supreme importance for the salvation of men as you would make it, why did He change the form of His announcement, why did He not say simply, "This is My blood"?

As a matter of fact, neither the Romanist nor the Anglo-Catholic takes the words about the cup with absolute literalness. And if you depart by a hair's-breadth from the literal interpretation in one case, you cannot insist upon it as the only possible or right interpretation in the other.

It seems, therefore, that some interpretation of our Lord's words other than a literal one is possible, nay, is probable with a probability that approaches certainty. But if any other than a literal interpretation be even

saying (p. 141) that two of the writers "give the sense rather than the exact words of Christ respecting the cup." I do not know what right he has to make such an assertion. Is he also among the higher critics?

possible, the case for transubstantiation falls to the ground. And in so far as the “Anglo-Catholic” theory also depends on the vehement assertion that our Lord’s words must be taken “literally,” it also is without proof from Scripture.

I need not remind you that the theory of transubstantiation was unknown until the eleventh century ; that it met with determined opposition from great doctors of the Roman Church, from philosophers and theologians of the highest rank ; that it was only forced upon the mediæval Church by physical force and persecution.

It is contradicted by the words of Scripture, where, after consecration, the wine is described as “the fruit of the vine,” the bread as “this bread.” It not only finds no place in the Fathers of the early Church, but is utterly excluded by their doctrine. It is so far from being tolerated by the great English divines that it for most of them forms the commonest object of attack. The English horror of the Mass is a horror against transubstantiation due to our having once clearly seen its monstrous falsity and having once tasted of its fatal fruits.

THE LORD'S SUPPER : THE  
FIGURATIVE VIEW

“We utterly condemn the vanity of those who affirm Sacraments to be nothing else than naked and bare signs.”  
—*Scots Confession, 1560.*

“*Nos dicimus auctiorem gratiam dari per sacramenti receptionem ; et quamvis actio organica sacramenti sit nobis incomprehensibilis, an ideo res ipsa neganda est ?*”—SAMUEL Rutherford.

## IX

### THE LORD'S SUPPER: THE FIGURATIVE VIEW

A SHORT letter will suffice to make plain our relation, the relation of most Protestant Churches, to the first of the four possible interpretations of our Lord's words —the merely “figurative view.”

I have said that I agree with Mr. Sadler in his repudiation of this, but I by no means agree with all the arguments he adduces, and I cannot but deplore the tone in which he and other Anglo-Catholics think fit to deal with the views of their fellow-Christians.

In his vehemence against the “merely figurative,” Mr. Sadler surrenders his case against transubstantiation.

Then he falls into the blunder of nearly all the controversialists on your side, by confusing together several schools of Protestant thought, which differ widely from one another in the significance they attach to the Sacrament. He argues, not unsuccessfully, against Socinus, and then invites his friends to

raise a pæan over Calvin. He demolishes Unitarians, and then assumes that he has confounded Evangelical Churchmen.

But even to those who do hold in its barest form the “merely figurative” view, he and you are conspicuously unfair. For to them even a figure is a figure of something. And this bread and wine are, to many Christians who may not go further, a figure of something very sacred, so sacred that it little beseems any other Christians to mock at their procedure or at the meaning they attach to it. There is no body of Christians whatever, observing the Lord’s Supper, who mean by it *less* than a proclaiming of Christ’s death till He come. I confess I am unable to understand how men like Sadler, Knox Little, and many others can dare to sneer at a Christian observance wherein the bread broken is to His disciples a figure or emblem of the wounded body of our Lord, and the wine poured proclaims to them the shedding of His blood. If this temper is the fruit of “sacramental” doctrine, it is sadly discredited by its fruits.

And yet I hold with the great majority of the Reformers, with most of the Reformed Confessions, and with the great majority of Evangelical Christians, that they who stop short at the “merely figurative” view fail to apprehend the full teaching of Scripture and all the meaning and potency of the Sacrament.

They do not do justice to the whole of the symbolic actions, which include not only the breaking of the bread, but the receiving and eating of it. The commemoration of the death is complete in the beholding of bread broken. Some further meaning is demanded for the second part of the action, some meaning congruous to the symbol. "Since then the elements in the sacred act exist to be partaken of, denoting consequently a gift to be received, and since the words, 'Eat,' 'Drink,' cannot mean a past or future gift, all that is left to be said is: The symbolism denotes a present gift offered to be partaken of; the elements are aliments."<sup>1</sup>

Neither do they do justice to the consciousness of the early Church expressed by St. Paul, "The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" (1 Cor. x. 16), which posits as part of the common experience of the Church a "common partaking" (*koinωνία*) of the body of Christ, and that in the Sacrament.

Further, it is not possible on this theory to account for the tremendous responsibility which, according to the same Apostle, attaches to participation in the Lord's Supper, so that "he that eateth and drinketh eateth and drinketh judgment to himself" (1 Cor. xi. 29). The Sacrament is in this respect placed on a

<sup>1</sup> Dorner, *Christian Doctrine*, iv. 312.

level with the Gospel or the Word of God. Like the “word” spoken by Christ, it acts as a judge. Like the Gospel, “it is a savour of life unto life,” but also unto death a savour of death. This judgment power in the Sacrament involves the communication of grace as the alternative to the ratification of judgment.<sup>1</sup>

But the upholders of this view seem to me to miss the deeper meanings of the Sacrament most of all through denying all connection of thought between the Holy Supper and the discourse in the tenth chapter of St. John’s Gospel.

Do not misunderstand me. Their extreme opinion in one direction is at least excusable as a reaction from your extreme view in the other. When I read in Canon Knox Little :<sup>2</sup> “The earliest record that we have of our Lord’s mention of the Blessed Sacrament is to be found in the sixth chapter of St. John’s Gospel,” I see the reason of this reaction. The connection between the rite and the discourse is exegetically an open question. That our Lord “mentions” the Blessed Sacrament in the sixth chapter of St. John is *not* an open question. It is simply not true. And a statement like that, made for a purpose, disqualifies its author in the eyes of all serious men.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Augustine, *in Joann. Tract. li.*, “bonos vivificat, malos mortificat.”

<sup>2</sup> *Sacerdotalism*, p. 161.

This is not the place to go into the exegetical question, but I may say that I believe there *is* a connection of thought between the discourse and the rite, and it is this. In the discourse there is set forth with great fulness a profound and essential truth concerning the way in which the life of the believing soul is sustained, and the same truth is in the Sacrament set forth in act and symbol.

In the discourse Jesus declares Himself to be the Bread from heaven, offered to men for the nourishment of their eternal life.

“As a man cannot have temporal life without eating bread suitable to the support of that life, so a man cannot have eternal life without eating bread suitable to the support of that eternal life.”<sup>1</sup>

Now the use you make of this discourse and of the teaching which is contained in it is to make it an exposition of the Supper, as if its meaning were exhausted in that. But will any one say that Christ, as the food of man, is communicated only through the Sacrament, that before the Sacrament was instituted these were empty words? “It is true,” says Dorner,<sup>2</sup> “that according to that discourse *faith* is able to partake of Christ’s flesh and blood, without the presence of the outward elements. But this must not be

<sup>1</sup> *Church Doctrine Bible Truth*, p. 150.

<sup>2</sup> *System of Christian Doctrine*, iv. 313.

employed to deprecate the import of the Holy Supper, but rather to enhance the import of faith, and of the Word of God, which faith grasps. Faith is already ‘spiritual eating,’ living communion with Christ, real participation in Him.”

How did our Lord intend this heavenly food to be appropriated? He neither indicated as a means a rite about to be established, nor did He leave the means uncertain, to be recognised by the Apostles when they had the Sacrament before them.

It is plain from the discourse that men were to get this nourishment by “coming to Christ.” As He said elsewhere, “If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink”; or again, “Ye would not come unto Me that ye might have life,” so here the secret of partaking of the bread from heaven lies in coming to Christ. And if we ask what that means, He tells us in the parallel clause, “He that cometh to Me shall never hunger: he that believeth on Me shall never thirst.” If Jesus had meant this experience to find its chief, not to say its sole, realization in the Sacrament, must He not have expressed himself differently; must He not have explained that an access apparently so universal was in fact strictly limited?

“But,” you say, “is not this limitation suggested, and the Sacrament directly referred to further on, when He says, ‘The bread that I will give is My

flesh”’? No, but in thus making His idea more precise Jesus affirms that it is as the incarnate Son that He offers Himself to me, as One who is partaker of our humanity. As bread and water comprise the essential wants of man, so flesh and blood represent the essential completeness of a man. When Christ offers His flesh to eat and His blood to drink, and insists on the necessity of men’s accepting what is offered, He offers just Himself, His whole Self, and “Himself as the Word made Flesh.”

God’s great gift to the world is His Son : Christ’s great gift to men is Himself. Men receive this gift together with all it involves—pardon, regeneration, salvation, eternal life, when they “come to” or “believe on” Christ. A union is then established between Him and those who believe of such a character that His life passes into theirs. No other figure could express the closeness and reality, the indispensableness and the results, of this union so well as this figure of food and feeding, nourishment and assimilation. What food is to the body, Christ is to the spirit, and as such must be continually appropriated if the regenerate soul is to live. But because this Divine Person is presented and offered to men incarnate in human flesh, it is His “flesh” that He “gives for the life of the world.”

When Jesus says, “He that eateth My flesh and

drinketh My blood dwelleth in Me and I in him,” He means, “ He that maketh Me utterly his own, Me, who for his sake became flesh and blood, *he* dwelleth in Me.” Now, as this union does not require to wait for the Sacrament that it may be established (for it follows upon faith), so neither does it depend upon the Sacrament even after the rite has been instituted.

On the other hand one moment’s consideration of the Lord’s Supper shows that it does set forth in act and symbol, and that in a most impressive way, the same profound and blessed truth which is contained in the Discourse. It is in fact “a picture of the Word,” and any conception of its meaning fails to do justice to the fulness of Christian experience if it overlooks the fact that the Sacrament conveys the grace which it represents. We may not agree as to how this takes place. But let us note that we agree in holding that through the Sacrament of the Supper the soul of the believer is in a special way and in a peculiar degree enabled to feed upon Christ.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See below, “The Catholic Reformed View,” p. 169 f.

## THE LORD'S SUPPER: THE ANGLO-CATHOLIC VIEW

“A sacrifice is a thing given to God : this Sacrament was a thing given to us. Nothing therefore can be of nature more contrary than your sacrifice and Christ’s Sacrament.”—  
**COOPER, BISHOP OF WINCHESTER.**

## X

### THE LORD'S SUPPER : THE ANGLO-CATHOLIC VIEW

I AM grateful to find that you recognise the sincerity of my purpose to ascertain what common ground there is between us. You are obviously surprised that there is so much. Forgive me saying that you ought not to be surprised. Even a layman interested in Church questions ought to know something about the opinions and the practices of those from whom he differs. And for those whose business it is to teach religion to be ignorant of the Protestant Confessions and the writings of the great Reformers is rather scandalous. But the greater blame must fall upon the writers of your textbooks and manuals, who have been at no pains to inform themselves concerning the actual views held by different branches of the Reformed Church, or to state them accurately.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> As an illustration of what I mean, I may quote one sentence from Dr. Gibson's work on the Thirty-nine Articles, a much-praised and much-used handbook : "The

But we come now to a line of clear separation, and you, I think, are not on the Scriptural side of it. As touching the Supper, we are agreed in dismissing the two extreme opinions, transubstantiation on the one hand, and the “merely figurative” on the other. There remain the two intermediate ones, that which I should call the Catholic Reformed (but you possibly the Receptionist), and the Anglo-Catholic.

As the line of demarcation between you and the Romanist is found in your assertion of the permanence of the elements, so the division between you and the general doctrine of the Reformed Churches (among which I reckon the Church of England, as her mind is expressed in her Liturgy and her Articles) is found in your assertion of the “objectivity” of the Real Presence.

Now, I confess that in the chaos of opinion on this

Swiss school of Reformers in regard to the Eucharist . . . held that the Presence was merely figurative” (p. 643). The “Swiss school of Reformers” includes—indeed practically consists of—Zwingli, Calvin and Farel. I have already shown that the statement is not true regarding Zwingli, though we may look for its repetition for many years to come among careless or ignorant people ; but Calvin ! His name must ever stand first among the “Swiss Reformers,” and such a statement can only be explained on the supposition that Dr. Gibson has never looked at what Calvin has to say upon the Supper.

subject which at present prevails within your Church it is exceedingly difficult to discover what is the "Catholic teaching" for which you contend. I have tried in vain to find out what it is that you believe to be "present" after consecration. Is it the body of Christ in the bread, and the blood of Christ in the wine? Or is it the human nature of Christ in both elements alike? Or is it, as the Tridentine Canon strangely asserts, "the body and blood together with the soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore the whole Christ," that is "contained" in one or both the elements?

You may say these questions never occurred to you. That is because you have never studied the classical literature on the subject concerning which you are so confident. These are questions which you have to face, and many others like them; and you will not find them easy to answer.

But, practically, you seem to think it sufficient to assert that after, and in consequence of, consecration Christ is present "on the altar" in the elements or "under the veils" of bread and wine. And He is there quite independently of any faith or other qualification in those who are to communicate. He is there, indeed, whether there are to be communicants or not. He is there, that is to say, apart from His Church. He Himself left the promise: "Where

two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them.” But you, shall I say, have improved upon that: one man, if he be a priest, can secure the presence of the Divine Redeemer.

Now, I have always thought that there could be no true Sacrament without the Church. I thought that was “Catholic teaching.” But a priest is not the Church, neither are a priest and a server. “*Ubi tres, ibi ecclesia.*”

The presence or absence of communicants at the Eucharist is not a mere question of expediency. It touches the validity of the Sacrament more vitally than almost any other question. The practice of “non-communicating attendance” not only exalts, as you see, the sacrificial aspect of the Eucharist, but, when carried to the extreme of a “Mass,” without any communicants at all, destroys, as you do not see, its sacramental character. Even if the Sacrament were “a feast upon a sacrifice,” you make it a sacrifice without a feast. The rite is emptied of all meaning as Communion. You have absolutely no authority for calling such a ceremony a Christian rite at all.

Neither can it be defended as a “Catholic” practice. It finds no support in the early Church. Have you never read St. Chrysostom’s passionate appeal to his people to present themselves at the Lord’s Table,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Chrysostom, *Comm. in Ep. ad Eph.*, Hom. 3 § 5.

his denunciation of those who were present without communicating? "Every one who partaketh not of the mysteries standeth in impudent and shameless fashion."

Do you not come under the reproach of one of your own bishops, who refers to the same passage? "When did any of you stand at the altar as Chrysostom did, and cry for the people to be partakers, declaring that in being present at this heavenly feast as gazers and no receivers they did run into the indignation and displeasure of God?"<sup>1</sup>

And does not your own liturgy continually testify against this practice of non-communicating attendance, with its invitation so solemn and tender addressed to the whole congregation: "Ye that do truly and earnestly repent you of your sins, draw near with faith"? You give this invitation in the name of Christ not meaning that it should be accepted, nay, prepared to refuse the Communion to any one who should accept it.

But I refrain from discussing the details and the implications of this theory, partly because, as I have said, it is so difficult to ascertain what they are.

It is the less necessary, inasmuch as the theory itself seems to me to be open to one general objection, which is at once unanswerable and fatal.

<sup>1</sup> Cooper, *An Answer against the Apology of Private Mass*, p. 68.

Your theory is self-contradictory.

It starts from the assumption (groundless, as we have seen) that the Words of Institution are to be taken literally. Its defenders are unmeasured in their scorn of the “figurative view.” In all honesty they suppose that in holding the “real objective” presence they submit their reason to the authority of their Lord.

But, ere the statement of the doctrine is complete, we are told that the bread remains bread; in other words, Christ’s words are no longer to be taken literally. It is not transubstantiated. It is Christ’s body *because* He said, “This is My body”; but it remains bread *although* He said, “This is My body.”

Now, I wish you would show me how any rational man can hold these two propositions at the same time.

You may possibly have recourse to the explanation in some form or other that the substance remains bread, but the bread receives the virtue or effect of the body. But then you have abandoned literalism. You have lost the “objective reality.” You are back at “virtualism.” And only Canon Knox Little can tell you how contemptible is the position you occupy.<sup>1</sup>

The truth is, those of your party who are now

<sup>1</sup> See Knox Little, *Sacerdotalism*, p. 164.

gravitating towards transubstantiation do so almost automatically. They are seeking the only logical terminus at which the “Anglo-Catholic” theory can come to rest. You accuse Protestants of “juggling with words”; but are you not juggling with ideas? Either Christ’s body is on the altar or it is not. If it is That which is on the altar, where is the bread? If it is not That which is there, what is the sacrifice?

This brings me to the question why you attach so much importance to the objectivity of the Presence. It may seem to you to add somewhat to the reality of the Communion, but for that it is not necessary, and the idea involves you in the new difficulty of explaining what occurs in the case of an admittedly unworthy participant, and in other cases familiar to the casuists which I need not specify.

It is not for that small gain that you expose yourself to the difficulties of the theory. The real importance of the objectivity of the Presence is that it is necessary to the theory of a Eucharistic sacrifice. It gives you, to put it bluntly, something to sacrifice.

Let us examine, therefore, this modern idea of the Eucharistic sacrifice; for if it is neither Scriptural nor primitive, you lose nearly all your inducement to cling to the “objective Presence.”

The idea of the Eucharistic sacrifice grows out of the aspect of the Lord’s Supper as a commemoration.

Is it not strange that the very aspect which, as “mere commemoration,” is so fiercely attacked by you should, by a little manipulation, be transformed into this most “Catholic” doctrine of sacrifice? One can see the beginning of the process in Mr. Sadler’s pages, although he refrains from pushing it very far.

The texts mainly relied on are, of course, “Do this in remembrance of Me,” and, “As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup ye do shew the Lord’s death till He come.”

Mr. Sadler says, “The sacrificial character of the Eucharist depends on these words”; and he lays the foundation for the doctrine by deducing from them the assertion: “The act of celebrating the Eucharist must directly be set forth as the most solemn memorial or commemoration possible *before God and men of the sacrifice of the death of Christ.*”

Now, it is out of these words, which I have italicized, that the doctrine of the Eucharistic sacrifice is developed. And yet, while of course the sacrificial aspect of our Lord’s death is prominent in the Sacrament, it is not expressed in either of these texts, and the idea of a commemoration *before God* is interpolated without the slightest justification.

If the word “shew” seems to you capable of ambiguity, then look at the Revised Version, where you will find, “Ye proclaim the Lord’s death”; or,

better still, look at the Greek, and you see a word (*καταγγέλλετε*) which is commonly used of “preaching,” proclaiming the Gospel, but never of human action towards God. I cannot find any ancient authority for this gloss upon the word which turns up in all your manuals. Cyprian, from whom, if from any one, we should expect to get it, interprets the phrase, “The blood of Christ is preached,”<sup>1</sup> plainly understanding it only of proclamation before men.

In spite of the support for the doctrine which he thus deduces from these texts, Mr. Sadler does not conceal from himself or his readers that the evidence of Scripture is insufficient to establish this conception of the Eucharist. He makes some important admissions.

Thus: “The sacrificial aspect of the Eucharist most assuredly does not seem prominent in the Scriptures which teach us the nature of the Sacrament. It appears rather in them as an ordinance in which God offers something to us than one in which we offer anything to Him.” And, after enumerating the characteristics of “sacrifice” as it appears in the Old Testament, he says:

“The Holy Eucharist, then, has scarcely onefea-

<sup>1</sup> “Christi sanguis scripturarum omnium sacramento ac testimonio effusus praedicatur.” (See T. C. Edwards, *ad loc.*).

ture in common with the things which in Scripture are called, and which English Churchmen commonly call, sacrifices.”

“The things offered in the Sacrament cost the offerer nothing. There is neither pain nor death suffered at the time by the thing offered. It is not wholly consumed or destroyed in such a sense as to be lost to the offerer. Nor is it partially destroyed, and the remainder consumed by the priests alone, as in the Levitical offerings most resembling it in form.”

The conclusion is surely obvious (and, remember, the arguments are Mr. Sadler’s, not mine), namely, that the Eucharist is not a “sacrifice” at all.

If that be so, it does not in the least affect the question at issue whether or not it “possesses the most intense sacrificial reality,” as he proceeds to argue that it does. It is on his own showing not a sacrifice.

That there is a truth, after which you are groping, true to Scripture and to experience, of which this idea is but a parody, I indeed believe. What it is I shall try to show later on. But it is to the credit of Mr. Sadler’s candour that he recognises the un-Scriptural character of “Catholic” teaching on this subject.

What he has to say of a general kind in its favour contains nothing beyond an emphasizing of the importance attached to the Sacrament in the early Church, which in itself, and in default of Scriptural

evidence, has no bearing on the question. For there may well have been, and in fact there were, quite other grounds for attaching high value to the Sacrament, apart from any sacrificial aspect.

But I suspect you will regard Mr. Sadler, in this matter, as an unsatisfactory, if not a dangerous, champion of your cause.

Shall we try Canon Knox Little? He is frankly more concerned with what "the Church of England" teaches than with what the Bible has to say. But he tries at least to establish his view of the first by the second. And on this point he gives no uncertain sound. "My contention is," he says, "that the Church of England teaches that the Eucharist is in the true sense a sacrifice."<sup>1</sup> That his Church in so doing has Scripture behind her he proposes to prove.<sup>2</sup>

The Eucharistic sacrifice is "foretold in prophecy" and "taught in the New Testament."

The proofs from prophecy resolve themselves into a vague reference in Isaiah to "priests and Levites" to be appointed from among the Gentiles, and the famous text in Malachi (i. 11):

"For from the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same My name shall be great among the Gentiles: and in every place shall incense be offered unto Me, and a pure offering."

<sup>1</sup> *Sacerdotalism*, p. 217.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 223.

The Canon's comment on this passage is so interesting that I will quote it. "Now, here, 'the sacrifice which should be offered is designated by the special name of meal offering.' It was not to be accepted from the Jews, but from the Gentiles. 'It was a special sacrifice, offered by itself as an unbloody sacrifice, or together with the bloody sacrifice. . . . In the daily sacrifice it was offered morning and evening with the lamb; as this was typical of the precious bloodshedding of the Lamb without spot upon the Cross, so was the meal offering which accompanied it of the Holy Eucharist.'"

On which I would remark :

1. There is nothing whatever "special" about the word translated "offering." It occurs some two hundred times in the Old Testament. What is "special" is the rendering "meal offering" adopted by Canon Knox Little, a rendering which the word receives only once in the Authorized Version (Num. v. 15).

2. Out of all the cases in which this word (*minchah*) occurs (some two hundred in all), it is only five times translated "sacrifice"; and each of these five, with one exception, has been quietly corrected by the Revised Version to "offering."

3. The distinction is of greater importance than perhaps you have recognised. The "minchah" was a "cereal offering," consisting of fruit, corn or vege-

tables, things not regarded as having the quality of life. On the other hand, an entirely different word is retained to express the sacrifice of things having life (zebach). The two forms of sacrifice may have concurred in some ceremonies. But they were essentially different in the conception they expressed. Now, to which of them, if to either, are we to relate the sacrifice of Christ? We can have no hesitation in saying to the second—to the zebach, and not to the minchah. It is the surrendered life in which we see the eternal value of our Lord's atonement. He gave "His life a ransom for many." And, further, it was the zebach, not the minchah, which furnished the worshippers with the means for a feast of reconciliation. So it is His broken body that Christ offers as the means of Communion. The "pure offering" of Malachi cannot, therefore, have any connection with the great sacrifice of the New Testament. It cannot be a prophecy of any ceremonial which repeats or "pleads" the sacrifice of Christ.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For the thorough investigation of the subject I would refer you to Robertson Smith's *Religion of the Semites* (chap. vi.), from which I take one sentence: "The cereal offering, therefore, has strictly the character of a tribute paid by the worshipper to his god, as indeed is expressed by the name minha; whereas when an animal is sacrificed, the sacrificer and the deity feast together, part of the victim going to each."

4. This want of connection is plain even in the Canon's own words. What was offered "with the Lamb" has nothing to do with what purports to represent the offering of the Lamb.

5. Attentively considered, therefore, this famous passage, if it has anything to do with the Eucharist at all, proves that it is in correspondence, not with those Old Testament rites which prefigured the sacrifice of the Cross, where the victim was a living one, but with rites of an entirely different character, in which the worshipper offered not a substitute for himself, but a material representation of himself.

6. Once more. The connection between Malachi's "pure offering" or "unbloody sacrifice" and the Eucharist is by no means supported, as is so commonly asserted, by the universal testimony of the Catholic Church. Tertullian interprets this prophecy of "the preaching of the Gospel unto the end of the world," and again as fulfilled in "simple prayer out of a pure conscience." St. Jerome expounds these words of the prophet thus: "He means that the prayers of the saints are to be offered unto the Lord, not in the single province of Judæa, but in every place."

7. But, apart from all these considerations there is a final one which deprives your theory of all support from this passage, and that is the uncertainty whether it is a prophecy at all, whether it is not a description

of what is, and not of what is to be. The balance of authority and the evidence of the Versions is strongly in favour of the present tense rather than the future. Indeed, if you will look at our own Revised Version, you will find that this text on which you so much rely has disappeared as a prophecy of the future : “And in every place incense is offered unto My name, and a pure offering.”

These things being so, is it vain to hope that your school will cease to harp upon this text as furnishing a prophecy of the Eucharist as a sacrifice, or even a presumption in favour of your doctrine ?

The Canon’s evidence from the New Testament, apart from the Words of Institution, resolves itself into two passages whose connection with the matter in hand is so distant and obscure that they testify rather to the weakness of the case which looks to them for support.

“Leave there thy gift before the altar” is a counsel obviously addressed to Jews in the only terms which they could understand. Jesus used such terms just as He used the language of Palestine. And you might as well insist that the only proper language for the Church is Aramaic as argue from such a saying that there must be an altar in the Christian Church.

There is more apparent plausibility about the quotation from the Epistle to the Hebrews, which is so

familiar in this connection : “We have an altar whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle.”

But you ought to know that there is no good ground for connecting this phrase with the Eucharistic sacrifice or directly with the Lord’s Table at all. It is by no means, as Canon Knox Little somewhat disingenuously suggests, “the opponents of Catholic doctrine” alone who “interpret this solely of the act of sacrifice on Calvary.”

You will not call Thomas Aquinas an opponent of Catholic doctrine, and yet his explanation of these words is this : “That altar is either the Cross of Christ on which Christ was sacrificed for us, or Christ Himself, in whom and through whom we offer our prayers.”

But it is not necessary for me to go into detail on this question, seeing that the whole matter has been thoroughly sifted, and a clear decision arrived at by one to whose authority and scholarship we all bow.

In the excursus on the subject which you will find in his *Commentary on the Hebrews*, Bishop Westcott has disposed of this and of many arguments of the same class. His conclusion is : “In this, the first stage of Christian literature, there is not only no example of the application of the word *θυσιαστήριον* to any concrete, material object, as the Holy Table, but

there is no room for such an application.”<sup>1</sup> The transition from a spiritual to a material sense of the word appears to begin with Irenæus, but it is not fully accomplished till “the writings of Cyprian mark a new stage in the development of ecclesiastical thought and language.”

There remain the Words of Institution themselves, in which Canon Knox Little and others find evidence for the sacrificial theory on which Mr. Sadler was too good a scholar to insist.

I must say this attempt to find the required evidence in the words translated “do” and “in remembrance” seems to me to amount to a confession of despair.

We are asked to believe that the words, “do this,” may rightly be translated, “offer this” or “sacrifice” this. Possibly they might be so paraphrased if the word “sacrifice” or “offering” were in the context; but not otherwise. The word *ποιεῖν* is as wholly neutral as our word “do” or “perform”; and even in those passages in the Septuagint where it seems to be used in a sacrificial sense it gets that colouring

<sup>1</sup> Westcott, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, pp. 456-458. Even by Irenæus the spiritual interpretation of the word “altar” is emphatically asserted. “He wills that we also should continually offer our gift at the altar. The altar, therefore, is in heaven (for thither are our prayers and offerings directed), and there also the temple” (*Adv. Haer.*, iv. c. 34).

from the presence in the context of indubitable reference to sacrifice.

When a master says to a boy, “Do a piece of prose,” and is understood to mean “translate a piece,” it does not follow that “do” means “translate,” though in this case the one word could be substituted for the other.

If Jesus had said, “Do this sacrifice,” we admit that “offer this sacrifice” would have been a fair paraphrase of the words. But when He said, “Do this,” to paraphrase by “offer this” is as arbitrary a proceeding as could well be conceived.<sup>1</sup>

The same must be said about the phrase *εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν*. To paraphrase this as “for a memorial before God” is to import a meaning into the

<sup>1</sup> Canon Gore touches on this point in his *Church and the Ministry*, p. 208 n. He says that “Justin Martyr interprets *ποιεῖν* as ‘to offer,’ and this use of the word is common in the LXX. without any qualification; e.g. in Exodus xxix. 36–41, Leviticus ix. 7–22 it occurs nine times. But it lacks support in the New Testament and generally in the Fathers and Liturgies.” On which I would remark that the quotation from Justin (*contra Tryph.* 41), if it does mean “the bread of the Eucharist . . . which Jesus gave to us to sacrifice,” contains an idea (sacrificing the bread) to which it would be hard to find a parallel: further, that the phrase, “without qualification,” is hardly justified in view of the fact that in both passages referred to sacrifice is the ruling idea.

words which they do not naturally bear. The word ἀνάμνησις may "correspond to another word" μνημόσυνον, but that does not change its meaning from "remembrance" to "memorial." The word "signifies not a something which is designed to put another in mind, but an actual putting of oneself in mind, or an observance which has this purpose in view."

And were the number of passages in the Septuagint in which a sacrifice is regarded as a "memorial" ten times greater than it is, they would do nothing to provide the proof you are really in search of, namely, that a memorial is always and necessarily a sacrifice.

The Words of Institution therefore cannot be made to bear the construction which Canon Knox Little, and others of your school would put upon them. The confirmatory evidence you seek from other passages of Scripture is admittedly of the vaguest description, and proves on investigation to be valueless for your purpose. You can neither establish from Scripture, nor can you even explain, the real *objective* presence of Christ in the elements. And yet, as Mr. Pullen clearly puts it:<sup>1</sup> "If the Body and Blood of Christ are not really present on the altar, the Victim of Calvary cannot be present on the altar, and if the

*History of the Book of Common Prayer*, p. 98.

Victim is not present, the sacrificial character of the service is changed.” It is not only “changed”; it disappears—unless you can prove the *objective* presence in the *elements*. And where are the proofs?

Possibly you hope to find them, if not in Holy Scripture, at least in the faith and practice of the early Church. Your manuals provide you with what seems to be evidence in favour of such a conception drawn from the use of words like “sacrifice” and “offering” in the literature of the first two centuries. I must reserve what has to be said on this point for a subsequent letter;<sup>1</sup> you will find there the simple and complete explanation of the use of all such language up to A.D. 200; but you will find that when rightly understood it lends no support to the Anglo-Catholic theory.

<sup>1</sup> See below, pp. 180 ff.

THE LORD'S SUPPER:  
THE CATHOLIC REFORMED VIEW

“We maintain that the body and blood of Christ are truly offered to us in the Supper in order to give life to our souls ; and we explain, without ambiguity, that our souls are invigorated by this spiritual aliment which is offered in the Supper just as our bodies are nourished by earthly bread.”—CALVIN.

“In the Lord’s Supper not only all the benefits of Christ, but also the very substance of the Son of man . . . are not merely set forth symbolically, figuratively, or typically, as the memorial of an absent person, but are truly and certainly represented, exhibited, and offered to be applied.”—BEZA.

“The real presence of Christ’s most blessed body and blood is not therefore to be sought for in the Sacrament, but in the worthy receiver of the Sacrament.”

“As for the Sacraments, they really exhibit, but for aught we can gather out of that which is written of them, they are not really nor do they really contain in themselves that grace which with them or by them it pleaseth God to bestow.”—HOOKER.

## XI

### THE LORD'S SUPPER : THE CATHOLIC REFORMED VIEW

IF we see good reason to dismiss three out of the four possible interpretations of the Eucharist, the figurative as defective, the Romanist as false, and the Anglo-Catholic as unproved and self-contradictory, we are left with that which I have called the Catholic Reformed. By this I mean the interpretation which is common to the Churches of the Reformation, and may be gathered from their confessions and the writings of their leading theologians.

I do not mean to say that all these Churches and all the writers to whom I would appeal are absolutely at one on every detail of the exposition ; but I do mean that there is between them and common to them all a type of doctrine on the subject, a general theory comprehensive enough to explain the Sacrament, and detailed enough to leave no practical difficulty unsolved.

My object is to show what this is, and that it is consistent with the truth of Scripture.

The controversy about the Lord's Supper is not only due to human frailty and interested motives. The controversy would have been impossible had not the thing in question been both great and mysterious.

It is mysterious because, as the very name 'communion' suggests, it has to do with the ultimate mystery of intercourse, the meeting of personalities, the breaking through of the barrier between the seen and the unseen. And if this is a mystery in the intercourse of human personalities, it is not lessened when one of the personalities is Divine.

And the subject is great, one of the greatest the mind can contemplate, because to an extraordinary degree the Lord's Supper gathers up into itself the greatest truths of our religion, and the deepest realities of our experience. Every aspect of Christ's work as Saviour, as Propitiation, as Friend, as Lord and Master, as Intercessor and as Judge is concentrated in the commemoration that we make. Every side of Christian experience, penitence and humility, joy and confidence, hope, peace and love, the sense of victory, and the assurance of eternal life, is reproduced and intensified in the Sacrament. Even those interpretations of the Lord's Supper which are most palpably

false, such as transubstantiation, are in part the result of a natural desire to account on rational or material principles for what is unaccountable, the intercourse between the soul and God.

The Lord's Supper is a means of grace. Like every other such means, it depends for its effectiveness, or, if you care to call it so, its validity, on the reciprocal action of the human spirit and the Divine. Like every other such means, it starts with the action of God. Whatever may be man's part therein, his action is throughout one of response. In Commemoration he responds to the facts : in Communion to the Presence and the promises of Christ : in Consecration to the requirements of God's Word. In no part, and under no aspect of the Sacrament, is man merely passive.

In so far, therefore, as your theory of the Sacrament tends to encourage a passive attitude of reception, it subverts not only the nature of the Sacrament, but the whole character of grace.

“ This do in remembrance of Me.”

“ Ye proclaim (*καταγγέλλετε*) the Lord's death till He come.”

More clearly than any other words of Scripture these texts set forth the purpose of the Sacrament, a purpose which must never be lost sight of. No explanation of the Lord's Supper can be fair to the facts

which does not put in the forefront this simple object, to bring vividly before the disciples' minds the Figure and Person of Jesus as He had been among them that last night, as He had companied with them all these last months, to bring vividly before the mind of later generations the Incarnate Person of the Saviour whom not having seen they love. We have in the story of Emmaus a graphic illustration of this function of the Sacrament. "He was known of them in the breaking of bread." Whenever His faithful Church is gathered round His Table, this experience is repeated, and the promise finds fulfilment that He will "cause Himself to shine" before them.

But the Commemoration is also a showing forth before men, a testimony to the unbelieving world, a proclamation in fact and figure of the things most surely believed among us—that the Word was made flesh, and that by His death He has made atonement for the sins of the world.

But even under this primary aspect the Sacrament conveys a gift from God, a gift which you seem to lose sight of when you transform the Commemoration into a Eucharistic sacrifice. The Sacrament is a divinely appointed sign of these things, calculated to present them vividly to our minds, and a perpetual seal of them, confirming them to our faith by an indubitable testimony. It authenticates by a visible

sign the proclamation of the love of God, who spared not His own Son.<sup>1</sup>

I need not dwell upon other aspects of the Sacraments which might be gathered up under the idea of Consecration, its opportunity of response to the demand of God upon us for mutual forgiveness, brotherly love, and corporate life in Christ, for greater devotion, purer motives and more tender consciences. Nor need I dwell upon the reciprocity which here, too, bases these demands on the Divine offer of sufficient grace for every need. These things are mercifully common to us all. Only let us see to it that we give to them their due proportion and emphasis.

What really divides us is the significance of the Sacrament as Communion. What is the Catholic Reformed, or, if you like, the Protestant doctrine as to our Communion with Christ in the Supper?

I should take as a starting-point the fact made known to us in the Word of God, and discovered by experience, that the soul of man has a need or craving

<sup>1</sup> This view, therefore, corresponds very closely with that of Ignatius as it is summarized by Höfling (*Lehre vom Opfer*, p. 39) : "For Ignatius the Eucharist is the 'flesh' of Christ as a visible Gospel, and at the same time is a Divine institution authenticating the contents of faith, the belief in the 'flesh that suffered,' which likewise serves the Christian community as a means both to display and to realize its unity in their faith."

for God which is fitly and best described as hunger and thirst.

“My soul is athirst for God, yea, for the living God.”

“Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness.”

It behoved our Lord, in dealing with human need in all its forms, to show how in His redemptive work this form also had its satisfaction secured. And in two different ways He was pleased to reveal how this need is met by Him. He revealed it in teaching and in symbol.

In the sixth chapter of St. John’s Gospel He taught, as we have seen, that man’s thirst and hunger for God are no mere fancies, but answer to real conditions of his nature. He taught that, unless they be provided for, man must die. But He taught also how this hunger and thirst were indeed provided for in God’s gift of Himself, the Bread that came down from heaven. “Whoso eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath eternal life”—that is the gift, the Incarnate Christ. And the gift is to be appropriated by faith, for “he that believeth on Me hath everlasting life.” “He that believeth” and “he that eateth” are not two but one. Neither is the believing separated from the eating, for each and both alike secure the gift of eternal life. When so appropriated by

faith, Christ, with all that Christ means, becomes the food of man, the true sustenance of the spiritual life which is eternal.

But our Lord revealed this mystery not only in teaching but in symbol. He gave us in the Sacrament a picture of the fact, a help to its comprehension, a help to its appropriation.

What we see there is a picture of what has been done. Jesus took bread and said: This represents My body; He took wine and said: This represents My blood of the New Covenant. So we, in obedience to His command, take bread and wine and ask the Holy Spirit that they may represent to us the body and blood of Jesus, the Person of our Incarnate Lord.

We have no distressing or perplexing problems to settle, such as must harass you, touching this body, whether it be the natural body or the glorified, concerning its locality or its ubiquity. We find all such speculations unnecessary, and escape the divisions which arise from them. For we take Jesus at His word, which we understand to mean: These things represent Me.

Jesus broke the bread saying that it represented His body "broken for you." He said of the wine that it represented His blood "shed for you." And when we see the bread broken and the wine poured, the Spirit, who brings home to our hearts the spoken word,

brings home with quickened apprehension this acted word, and by His operation through the Sacrament we have an intensely vivid perception of our Lord's sacrifice for us, and of the benefits of His death and Passion.

Jesus gave the bread and gave the cup to His disciples saying, “Take,” “Eat,” “Drink”; and so we receive bread and wine from His hand, for He is the Giver of the feast (*epulum atque hospes*). And feeding on them with our lips, we “feed on Him in our hearts by faith.” We do in fact that which in His discourse He invited us to do, that which He set forth as the condition of abiding and abounding life in Him. The same Holy Spirit, “Giver of Life,” who at the first persuaded and enabled us to embrace Christ Jesus offered to us in the Gospel, does now both persuade and enable us to receive Him offered in the Sacrament. The same faith by which we laid hold of Him, the Saviour, unseen yet near, is now the hand by which we grasp Him, the Bread from heaven, near though unseen.

There are few Evangelical Protestants who believe *less* than this concerning the Lord's Supper, even among those whose doctrinal statements might not seem to reach so far. And to suggest, as Mr. Sadler does (p. 139), that any of these interpret our Saviour's words as “nothing more than ‘Devoutly contemplate

My atonement,' 'inwardly digest the truth that I suffer as your propitiatory Sacrifice,' " is to bring a railing accusation, and one of dubious taste, against the brethren.

Need I point out that this Catholic Reformed view does not come under the condemnation that it "practically divests the Sacrament of all mystery"?<sup>1</sup> We reverently recognise the mystery, but we see where it truly lies — not in any change in or upon the elements, but in the intercourse or communion between Christ and His Church, whether mediated, as in this case, by feeding on bread and wine, or, as in other cases, by the hearing of His Word ; or whether yet more mysteriously induced by the direct influence of His Holy Spirit. Neither do we deny the Real Presence of Christ in the Sacrament. Your party have so long and so loudly asserted that we do, that some amongst us are tempted to believe it true. But, on the contrary, the Catholic Reformed doctrine maintains the Real Presence of the Lord Jesus Christ with His people *in the Sacrament*. What it denies is the "Real objective Presence" of Christ in the elements.

You mark the difference. When you think you see reason for the common assertion that Protestants

<sup>1</sup> Sadler, *Church Doctrine Bible Truth*, p. 125.

do not believe in the Real Presence, it is really due to the loose way in which you yourselves commonly think and speak on the subject. You speak of your belief in the Real Presence of Christ in the Sacrament as though that distinguished your position from ours. But if you mean “Real objective Presence” in the elements, that is the phrase you ought to use. You mislead yourselves and you mislead others by saying Sacrament when you mean elements. When you are referring to Baptism, you do not speak of the water as the Sacrament. By Sacrament you properly understand as we do, the whole action—in the one case the washing with water, in the other case the action of blessing, consecrating, and partaking of the elements.

Is it not then a serious inaccuracy of language when you describe your distinctive view as belief in the Real Presence *in the Sacrament*?

But we, on the other hand, are strictly accurate when we say that we believe in the Real Presence of Christ in the Sacrament.

To deny it would be not only to deny the reality of that presence which He has promised to His people to the end of the world; it would be also to overlook the function of the Sacrament as a special opportunity to realize His presence. He is present as the Master with His disciples, as the King with His guests, as

the Head of the Church which is His Body, present to convey that which is signed and sealed by the symbols of His death. It is not in any part of the Sacrament, or in any sacramental action that He is present, but in the whole. It is not any part of Him that is present, but it is the complete Christ, especially in the redeeming grace of His sacrifice, that is given afresh as often as we communicate, and it is this that our faith receives.

To sum up, the grace of the Sacrament is a special case of the universal grace of God accessible to us through prayer.

The presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper is a special case of His continual presence with His Church.

The feeding on Christ in the Supper is a special case of the general law that He is the spiritual food of men.

There is no reason or justification in Scripture for recognising differences in kind, either in the grace, the presence, or the spiritual nourishment. The grace, presence, and nourishment are granted to all true Christians in any circumstances when they seek after Christ with devout and penitent hearts. But in the Sacrament these things come to men with peculiar readiness, with unusual fulness, and with special intensity. They do so for two reasons.

First, because they come by a channel specially appointed by Christ; and secondly, because they come to us not as individuals but as a society, as members one of another, as the Body of Christ.

The Archbishop of Canterbury has wisely said that the grace of the Sacrament does not differ in kind from the grace of prayer.

But though it does not differ in kind from the grace of prayer, the grace of God as apprehended in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper may well differ in degree from the same grace apprehended in other ways. That it does so seems to be established as a matter of Christian experience by the witness of the Christian consciousness in all parts and in all ages of the Church.

And if we enquire into the reasons for this special value attaching to the Sacrament as a means of grace, they appear to be threefold.

It is due first to the peculiar vividness with which Christ's people, aided by the sacred symbols and the symbolic actions, apprehend the presence with His Church of their living Lord, apprehend at once the sacrifice and the grace of Christ. Their faith is thereby strengthened to a firmer grasp.

It is due, secondly, to the peculiar concentration by which all the elements of Christ's redeeming work are presented to the soul in one moment of experience.

The grasp of faith is enlarged so as to hold the whole Christ and all the aspects of His redeeming work.

And thirdly, the peculiar value of the Sacrament lies also in its social character. Individualism, the necessary individualism of the Gospel, which each man has to accept for himself, finds here its counterpoise, extreme individualism its antidote. The Master meets with His disciple, not as when He first called him, as a unit, but as a member of a sacred Society. He meets in the Sacrament not merely an assemblage of believing men, but His Church, which is His Body, and His several disciples as members one of another.

It would lead me too far to show, though it could be done without difficulty, that this "Catholic Reformed" view of the Lord's Supper is that which is embodied in your Book of Common Prayer, and in your Articles, as it was held by all the great Fathers of the English Church. This is true not only of the divines of the "Puritan" period to whom you now refuse respect, but also of Hooker and his contemporaries, and even of the Caroline divines whom too many of your handbooks represent as holding very different views. To refer to one point only, the "objective" presence is practically repudiated, and the presence to the faith of the receiver is asserted, by one after another of these unquestionably Anglican

authorities. Bishop Overall declares that the Body of Christ “is given to, and received by, *worthy receivers* in the right use of the Sacrament,” “by the operation of the Holy Spirit through faith.” Bishop Cosin denies that the Body and Blood of Christ are “sensibly present” or “otherwise at all present but only to them that are duly prepared to receive them and the consecrated elements together.” Bishop Andrewes indignantly repudiates the phrase you are trying to bring into currency, that Christ is present “under the species” of bread and wine.<sup>1</sup> The view held by these and other theologians whose “Catholicism” is beyond suspicion definitely stopped short of what you call the “objective presence.” It is not to be distinguished from the view you seek to dismiss as “Receptionism” or “Virtualism,” and try to connect with such names as Calvin and Bucer alone. It is in fact the Reformed Catholic view, between which and the doctrine of Rome there is no solid ground but a great gulf.

<sup>1</sup> See the valuable analyses of the teaching of these and other Anglican authorities contributed by Bishop Dowden to the *Guardian* during August and September, 1900.

CHRISTIAN SACRIFICE : FALSE AND  
TRUE

“The New Testament or perfected conception of sacrifice involves the position that the acceptable sacrifice is essentially an offering of persons, and of things and rites only as adjuncts or expressions of persons.”—CANON GORE.

## XII

### CHRISTIAN SACRIFICE: FALSE AND TRUE

Now to all this I can imagine your making one reply. You may say: "The evidence from Scripture is in each particular case weaker than I thought; I must admit that no single passage undoubtedly contains the doctrine of the Eucharistic sacrifice; nevertheless these passages taken together leave on my mind a total impression in favour of some sacrificial meaning of the Sacrament."

This is, I believe, a not uncommon state of mind, and it is one very difficult to deal with. It is frankly illogical. It says, in effect, "This cannot be proved, and yet I believe it."

Now this is an attitude to which we cannot deny respect. You raise the significance of the Eucharist to the level of primary doctrine, like the Being of God, or the Incarnation of Christ. You say it cannot be demonstrated, but several converging lines of evidence seem to find in it their meeting-point, and it

is, and must be, faith which grasps the truth to which they point.

I say we cannot deny respect to a conviction such as that, pious and helpful as it seems to be to some souls, so long as it does not lead to superstitious abuse, and so long as it remains a private opinion.<sup>1</sup>

But when you come abroad with this doctrine, asserting that it is the central idea and the main purpose of the Eucharist, when, on the ground of it, you attack, disparage, and deny validity to the Sacrament as understood and practised by those who do not hold this view, the case is altered. You challenge a reply which may not only repel your attack but destroy your own position.

In the first place, let me point out the precariousness of “a total impression” whose supports prove one by one to rest on faulty or false interpretations of Scrip-

<sup>1</sup> This was the attitude, for example, of Bishop Forbes of Brechin, who, when accused of teaching that “supreme adoration is due to the body and blood of Christ mysteriously present in the gifts,” replied, “While I conscientiously believe those opinions, rightly understood, to be in accordance with Holy Scripture and the teaching of the ancient Church, and to be in accordance with the formulæries of our own Church, I expressly disclaim all right to enforce them on those subject to my jurisdiction.” A view thus held cannot of course be made a ground for breaking communion with others not “subject to his jurisdiction.”

ture. You call six or a dozen witnesses. On cross-examination their evidence breaks down. They do not say what you expected them to say. It is no use to point to their number, or to assert your own confidence in them. Your case is not proved.

And the burden of proof lies upon you. You assert an extraordinary and exclusive power. On the ground of it you claim the reverence and submission of all Christ's followers. It is for you to make good the claim, and to do it on the ground of His teaching or the teaching of His Apostles.

But there is a still more important consideration to which I must now draw your attention, which removes the last ground for your theory. I refer to the fact that for at least two centuries the Church suffered, and suffered gladly, under the reproach that it had neither altar nor sacrifices.

One of the commonest and most effective weapons in the hands of the pagan critics of Christianity was the accusation that the new religion lacked these, to the pagan mind, elementary and essential features. They *sneered* at the religion which had none of the external marks by which hitherto religion had been known, which had neither temple, nor altar, nor sacrifice.

And what reply did the Christian apologists make to this? They admitted the facts as stated. They

did not explain that their critics were mistaken, that the Christians *had* an altar, though not one for burnt offerings; that they *did*, in their Eucharist, offer sacrifice, though not of a material kind. There is no suggestion of such a defence. The apologists, on the contrary, justified the absence of these things. They took up the position of the Old Testament prophets in *their* conflict with sacerdotalism, further fortified by the accomplishment of the one final Sacrifice of Calvary, and by the perfect revelation of God as Spirit, and of man's relation to Him as spiritual which had been given by Jesus Christ.

Look at these sentences from Athenagoras, who flourished towards the end of the second century:

“Those who charge us with atheism have not even the faintest conception of what God is; they are foolish and utterly unacquainted with natural and Divine things, and measure piety by the rule of sacrifice. . . . As to our not sacrificing: the Framer and Father of this Universe does not need blood, nor the odour of burnt offerings, nor the fragrance of flowers and incense, forasmuch as He is Himself perfect fragrance, needing nothing, either within or without; but the noblest sacrifice to Him is for us to know who stretched out and vaulted the heavens and fixed the earth in its place like a centre. . . . Yet it does behove us to

offer a bloodless sacrifice and the service of our reason.”

Or, again, take another apologist of the same period, Minucius Felix, who meets the accusation that the Christians have neither temples, altars, nor images, with a similar reply :

“ Shall I offer victims and sacrifices to the Lord, such as He has produced for my use, that I should throw back to Him His own gift ? It is ungrateful, when the victim fit for sacrifice is a good disposition and a pure mind and a sincere judgment. Therefore he who cultivates innocence supplicates God ; he who cultivates justice makes offerings to God ; he who abstains from fraudulent practices propitiates God ; he who snatches man from danger slaughters the most acceptable victim. These are our sacrifices, these are our rites of God’s worship ; thus among us he who is most just is he who is most religious.”

And once more, Lactantius represents the same view as late as the beginning of the fourth century :

“ What then does God require from man but worship of the mind which is pure and holy ? . . . It is justice only which God requires. In this is sacrifice, in this is the worship of God.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Professor A. V. G. Allen, who gives these quotations, comments thus upon them : “ These utterances belong to

Now, I ask you, is it conceivable that if the early Church had held any view of the Eucharist as a Sacrifice in the least degree corresponding to yours, her representative men would have used such language as this, that they would have refrained from meeting the pagan attack with an exposition of this doctrine?

But still further, when we turn to the early patristic accounts of the Lord's Supper which have come down to us, we find the same marked absence of any reference to the sacrificial idea.

I will not insist on the evidence from the *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, for to us also its teaching appears defective. It does not represent the full Christian consciousness as we find it in the New Testament. Nevertheless you have to reckon with the fact that this very early document, which was widely esteemed in the Church, prescribes Eucharistic prayers wherein there is not a trace of the sacrificial idea. But when we come to Justin Martyr, about

the Church of the first three centuries. Another motive was destined to become influential, which should so reverse the spirit and the action of the Christian Church that not only would language like this become unfamiliar and unwelcome, but it would even appear as hostile to the principles of Christian worship in a later age" (*Christian Institutions*, p. 451). It was this reversal of the Apostolic and primitive conception which it required the Reformation to reverse.

the middle of the second century, we have two detailed accounts of the manner of celebrating the Eucharist. Here is one of them :

“ There is then brought to the president or leader among the brethren bread and a cup of wine mixed with water ; and he, taking them, gives praise and glory to the Father of the Universe through the name of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and offers thanks at considerable length for our being considered worthy to receive these things. And when he has concluded the prayers and thanksgivings, all the people express assent by saying Amen. And when the president has given thanks, and the people have expressed assent, those who are called by us deacons give to each of those present, to partake of the bread and wine mixed with water, over which the thanksgiving was pronounced and to those who are absent they carry away a portion.”

Justin’s second account is practically to the same effect.

Again you observe there is no trace of any sacrificial idea connected with the Eucharist. There is no offering up of the elements. Yet you would have us believe that this was in the early Church, and must be now, an essential part and the prominent part of the Sacrament.

The burden of proof is upon you.

The passages of Scripture on which you rely do not bear out your contention.

The Church of the second century was taunted with its lack of altar and sacrifice.

The descriptions of the Eucharist as celebrated in the Church of the first two centuries are conspicuously silent on the subject. And yet you say that this is “Catholic teaching.”

“You build the highest castle of your religion upon a guess.”

How then, you ask, did this idea take its rise? How did the Church come (as it did after the third century) to see in the Eucharist a Sacrifice, to make oblation of the elements?

In explaining this we shall account for that general impression which remains in your mind after studying the New Testament, and also the frequent references in early Christian literature to “sacrifice” and “offering.”

One finds in your handbooks those passages which contain references to *θυσία*, *sacrificium* or *oblatio*, in support of this sacrificial theory of the Eucharist, without the slightest attempt to understand their true meaning. Fortunately, it will not be necessary to discuss these cases in detail; for they all fall under one general rule, which I give on the authority of the greatest living master of historical theology. “Thus,

apart from one instance in the Apostolic Constitutions (*ἡ προσφορὰ τοῦ σώματος καὶ τοῦ αἷματος*) we have no proofs that before the time of Eusebius in the East men spoke of an offering of the Body of Christ in the Lord's Supper.”<sup>1</sup>

The time of Eusebius corresponds with the first quarter of the *fourth* century; and if we go back from this late point to the close of the second century, we may make the rule absolute. There is in the first two centuries no case where “sacrifice” or any cognate word is used in Christian literature to signify a sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ.

Christianity stood forth before the world unique and supreme in its possession of a spiritual conception of God. This carried with it as a corollary a relation between God and man which is fundamentally ethical and spiritual. This relation may find natural expression in outward forms, and may by them be assisted, but is in itself primary, prior to all forms, and independent of them.

“In accordance with the purely spiritual representation of God, it was firmly held that only a spiritual service was well-pleasing to Him, and that all ceremonies were done away. Since, however, according to Old Testament and Apostolic tradition, it was just

<sup>1</sup> Harnack, *Dogmengeschichte*, i. p. 391.

as firmly held that Divine worship was sacrifice, the Christian homage to God was regarded from the point of view of a spiritual sacrifice. In the most general sense it was understood as a sacrifice of heart and of obedience, as also the sanctification of the whole personality in soul and body to God.”

“In the most special sense what was accounted as the sacrifice (*προσφορά, δῶρα*) was the prayers, sent up by the worshippers in the Divine service of the congregation, and the gifts offered along with them, out of which the communion elements were taken, and which were applied, partly to a common meal, partly to the support of the poor.”<sup>1</sup>

This quotation from Harnack refers to the first period of the Church’s history as an organized community, and covers the writings of the Apostolic Fathers, of Justin, of Clement, and of Irenæus.

In a word the Church, being taught by the Spirit that sacrifices were no longer necessary, learnt of the same Spirit that all worship is sacrifice.

The early Church recognised that the one final and sufficient offering of a propitiatory character had been offered by Christ upon the Cross—that the only offering by man which could be well-pleasing in God’s sight was the surrender of himself. This last conception fully accounts for all language whether in the

<sup>1</sup> Harnack, *Dogmengeschichte*, i. p. 173.

New Testament or in early Christian literature which seems to have a sacrificial significance.

It is the conception underlying St. Paul's appeal that the Romans should "present their bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is their reasonable service," that is to say "their spiritual worship" (*λογικὴ λατρεῖα*).

These are the "spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" which St. Peter exhorts his converts to present.

The sacrifice rendered by Christians according to the writer to the Hebrews is the "sacrifice of praise to God," "the fruit of our lips" (Heb. xiii. 15).

For this sacrifice, internally one of self-surrender, externally one of praise and thanksgiving, which was required of the individual, the Church provided in its public worship a symbolic expression. Praise and prayer, worship and adoration were the spiritual sacrifices of the Christian; and the offering of his substance, the presentation to God for the use of the poor and the sick of bread and wine and the fruits of the earth, was the solemn expression of his surrendered will. Now as these things took place at the weekly gathering for worship which found its climax in the "breaking of bread," the idea of "sacrifice" in this spiritual sense came almost inevitably to be associated with the Eucharist.

We find the first trace of this in the *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, where the ceremony is described as “sacrifice of thanksgiving.” From this point forward the description becomes common, and an ever-widening entrance is made for the introduction of Old Testament ideas and Old Testament terms in connection with sacrifice. The habit of regarding all prayers as sacrifices, the mistaken interpretation of the passage in Malachi, the gradual separation of the Eucharist from the common meal of which it was at first a part, all these and other influences served to strengthen and deepen the sacrificial conception. But even in Justin and Irenæus the chasm is not bridged which divides the spiritual sacrifice of thanksgiving in connection with the Eucharist from a Eucharist which is in any sense an offering of the body and blood of Christ. Down to the end of the second century and even later, it remains true that “the sacrifice in the Lord’s Supper is, in its character and main purport, that is to say *apart* from the alms-offering which in practice was connected with it, nothing else than a sacrifice of prayer.”<sup>1</sup>

Among the offerings made at this service of weekly worship were bread and wine, and of them a portion was set aside for the purpose of fulfilling the Lord’s

<sup>1</sup> Harnack, *Dogmengeschichte*, i. p. 179.

command, “Take and eat this, Drink this, Do this, in remembrance of Me.” The offerings of the people became the elements of the Eucharist ; and in them the Church of the first two centuries recognised the “pure” or “unbloody” sacrifice of Malachi. Her *θυσία* or *προσφορά* was internally the surrendered heart, symbolically the “offertory.”

It is in this connection between the offertory and the Eucharist that we find the simple explanation of many allusions which are pressed into the service of your theory. It is of course impossible for me now to discuss severally the numerous passages to which I refer. But I can seriously assure you that every passage in the writings of the first two centuries where the idea of sacrifice is connected with the Eucharist is naturally and wholly explained by one of three ideas. The reference is either to the offering, the oblation of the gifts of the people, or it is to the offering, the sacrifice of the people themselves to God, or it is to the “sacrifice of prayer.”

Take a few illustrations.

1. Prayer as “sacrifice.” Justin Martyr says, “I also assert that both prayers and thanksgivings, made by those who are worthy, are the only perfect and well-pleasing sacrifices to God.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Justin, *Dial.* 117. The word translated “thanksgiving” is *εὐχαριστία*.

Clement of Alexandria writes : “ We worship God through prayer, and send up this sacrifice as the best and worthiest after righteousness.”

Irenæus, again, has the same idea : “ The Saviour enjoined us to offer offerings, but not those that are made by means of senseless beasts or incense, but by spiritual praise and glory and thanksgiving, and by a spirit of friendliness and benevolence towards our neighbour.”

And Origen in like manner : “ The bread that is called ‘ eucharist ’ is to us a symbol of thanksgiving towards God.”<sup>1</sup>

2. The people of Christ as sacrifice. This conception enjoys an authority which we have seen to be wholly lacking to your theory. It is strictly in accordance with the teaching of the New Testament. St. Peter, writing not to the clergy, but to the Christian community, “ strangers scattered throughout Pontus,” etc., reminds them : “ Ye also . . . are built up . . . an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” And the material of such sacrifices is plain from St. Paul’s exhortation to the Romans : “ I beseech you therefore . . . that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice,

<sup>1</sup> Clem. *Strom.* vii. 6, 31 ; Iren. iii. 18, 3. Cyril also speaks of the hymns and praises offered by the angels and the redeemed in heaven as “ unbloody sacrifices.”

holy, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship."

In both cases there is an emphasis on the word translated "spiritual"; a contrast is plainly intended with the sacrifices of the Jews, and possibly those of the heathen, in their external and material character.<sup>1</sup>

It is this "offering up of the Gentiles" which St. Paul looks upon as the end and crown of his ministry, the purpose of the grace given to him by God (Rom. xv. 16). As the agent in this offering, the Christian minister, in a certain restricted sense, may be said to have a "priestly consciousness." But the one offering and sacrifice to be made by man, referred to in the New Testament, is this offering of the "congregation of faithful men," "sanctified by the Holy Spirit," which is "the body of Christ."<sup>2</sup>

Many phrases in early Christian literature and liturgies find their explanation in this most Christian conception that the Church, the Body of Christ, is the true sacrifice acceptable to God. The finest exposi-

<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to notice that the word *λογική*, translated "spiritual," is in the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs bracketed with "unbloody"; *λογικὴ καὶ ἀναίμακτος προσφορά* of the sacrifice which the angels offer to God (Grimm).

<sup>2</sup> See an article on "Ministering in Sacrifice," in the *Expositor* for February, 1900.

tion of it that I know is given by Augustine in the chapter of the *de Civitate* which he entitles “Of the True and Perfect Sacrifice.” Weigh well these sentences :

“The true sacrifice is accordingly every work which is wrought in order that we may abide by a sacred fellowship in God.”

“It is done verily in order that the whole redeemed state itself, that is the congregation and society of the saints, may be offered as a universal sacrifice to God through that great Priest who offered Himself in the Passion for us, in order that we might be the body of so great a Head, according to the form of a servant.”

And then, after quoting the verse in Romans xii., he adds : “This is the sacrifice of Christians—many one body in Christ. And this the Church displays in the Sacrament of the altar familiar to the faithful, wherein is made plain to her that in that which she offers she herself is offered.”

There can be no doubt that from very early times these two ideas of praise and prayer as sacrifice and of the people as sacrifice found both a link and a form of expression in the service called the Eucharist. That service found its climax naturally in the offering up of the gifts of the people. The mediæval corruptions of the Lord’s Supper began when, by a misunderstanding of the Words of Institution, due to many concurrent

causes, this spiritual sacrifice of thanksgiving and surrender was transformed into a material sacrifice of propitiation.

It is a curious and striking fact that, after all the changes it has undergone, the Roman Missal still retains indubitable traces of this, the primitive conception. In the Ordinary of the Mass the oblation of the elements takes place before consecration. It is the *unconsecrated* "Host," the simple bread which the priest offers to God, saying, "Accept, O Holy Father, this unspotted Sacrifice" (*Immaculata Hostia*), and this he offers "for all faithful Christians, both living and dead."

And your own Communion Service not only is without any oblation of the consecrated elements whatever (an omission which Mr. Sadler "regrets"),<sup>1</sup> but

<sup>1</sup> I may point out that if you are determined to insist on the "Catholic" view of the Eucharist, this Sacrament of the English Church lies under grave suspicion of being invalid, because of the absence from your liturgy of any *Epiklesis* or Invocation of the Holy Ghost, which has always been regarded by the Catholic Church as essential to consecration. John Ernest Grabe, a profound student of these matters in the seventeenth century, came to the conclusion that through this defect in your service the consecration is, if not null and void, yet so uncertain and doubtful, that he preferred to leave the Church of England and connect himself with a Church in London where a different and more satisfactory

preserves its own indelible record of the Scriptural and primitive practice. In the prayer for the Church Militant, which occurs of course before the consecration, solemn oblation is made of the gifts and offerings of the people: while in one of the prayers after the Communion oblation is made, not of the elements, but of the people: “Here we offer and present unto Thee, O Lord, ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy and lively sacrifice unto Thee.” This is the one sacrifice which is required of the Church, the one sacrifice which the Church can offer.

The chasm between this, the primitive conception of worship as the expression of sacrifice, and the “Catholic” view of the Eucharist as a memorial (and later a propitiatory) sacrifice may not seem wide, but beyond doubt is very deep. The Church stood in safety on one side of this chasm down to the end of the second century. But already, under various influences, ideas were being pushed forward which

form of service was in use (see Grabe, *De Forma Consecrationis*, p. 89). In my own Church the *Epiklesis* is never omitted.

Further, you depart from “Catholic”—not merely primitive—practice by kneeling at the Lord’s Supper, which is a Western innovation, and a late one; and you make a still wider breach between yourself and the “undivided” Church if you adopt the use of unleavened bread in the Sacrament, which is a Roman innovation not older than the ninth century.

tended to throw over it a bridge. The man who completed the bridge over which the Church so disastrously passed was Cyprian. It is an unworthy attempt on the part of your controversialists to discredit this estimate of Cyprian's influence as due merely to "Protestant" prejudice. The judgment of Bishop Westcott may dispose of that. "The writings of Cyprian mark a new stage in the development of ecclesiastical thought and language. In them the phraseology of the Levitical law is transferred to Christian institutions. The correspondence between the old system and the new is no longer generally that of the external and material to the inward and spiritual, but of one outward order to another."<sup>1</sup>

And the important point to notice is that the forces to which he yielded, the conceptions of God and His relation to man to which he gave embodiment, were not of specifically Christian origin.

On the one hand there were the influences of Judaism made powerful by the uncritical use of the Old Testament. Devoid of any sense of historical development, the Church of that period saw no alternative between casting overboard the Old Testament altogether, and putting it absolutely on the same plane as the New. Marcion and other heretics did the former, Cyprian and other Catholics did the latter.

<sup>1</sup> Westcott, *Hebrews*, p. 458.

They put Mosaic ritual and organization on the same level of authority with Apostolic injunctions and example. The threefold ministry of high priest, priest and Levite must needs find its counterpart in bishop, priest and deacon ; the sacrifice of the temple its parallel in the sacrifice of the altar. Vestments, incense, etc., were taken over from the Jewish ritual into the Christian Church. That which had been at best temporary and typical, which had been “done away” in the perfect work and revelation of Christ, was now revived as though it were permanent and eternal in its value. It would be rash to say that there was a “movement for introducing sacerdotalism” in the modern sense of concerted action and conscious purpose. But the steps of the process can be traced without difficulty. The whole movement of Montanism is only to be understood and explained as a reaction of the primitive consciousness of the Church against the intrusion of non-Christian elements, elements which had been transcended by Christianity, such as sacrifice, priesthood and hierarchical authority. I do not mean, of course, that we are to see in Montanism a survival of primitive Christianity, but that Montanism never could have had the success it attained if there had not been a widespread perception that a change of profound importance was threatening the character and organization of the Church.

This process, which affected all sides of Christian thought and worship, was crystallized into definite results through the teaching of Cyprian.

“Cyprian was the first to co-ordinate a specific sacrifice, namely the sacrifice of the Eucharist, with a specific priesthood.”

“He was the first to describe the ‘Passion of the Lord,’ nay, the ‘Blood of Christ’ and the ‘Dominica hostia’ as the material of the Eucharistic oblation.”<sup>1</sup>

It is not to the Apostles, but to Cyprian, not to Jerusalem, but to Carthage, not to the New Testament, but to the tract *de Eleemosynis* that you must look for the source of “Catholic teaching.”

At the same time a large though an unascertained influence must be ascribed to the prevailing ideas and practices of surrounding religions. Into this subject I cannot now enter, but would merely draw your attention to the many investigations which have recently been made into the connections between the “Catholic” cultus as developed in these centuries and the religious mysteries of Egypt and of Greece.

But whoever may have been responsible, whatever may have been the subtle causes at work to produce this profound and most unfortunate change in the Church’s conception of the Eucharist, it is sufficient

<sup>1</sup> Harnack, *Dogmengeschichte*, i. p. 390.

for me to have shown you, as I think I have done, that the idea of the Eucharistic sacrifice is neither Scriptural nor primitive. Even if you modify it to a “pleading or the sacrifice of Christ,” you have no support from Scripture nor from the testimony of the early Church. The Scriptural language which is commonly adduced in its support has an entirely different reference, while the whole tenor of thought and practice in the first two centuries is distinctly against it. If you have any respect for primitive tradition, still more if you are sincere in your appeal to Scripture, the Anglo-Catholic interpretation of the Eucharist must be abandoned.

THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY :  
IS IT A PRIESTHOOD ?

“ So it was with the Christian priesthood. For communicating instruction and for preserving public order, for conducting religious worship and for dispensing social charities, it became necessary to appoint special officers. But the priestly functions and privileges of the Christian people were never regarded as transferred or even delegated to these officers. They are called stewards or messengers of God, servants or ministers of the Church, and the like ; but the sacerdotal title is never once conferred upon them. The only priests under the Gospel, designated as such in the New Testament, are the saints, the members of the Christian brotherhood.”—BISHOP LIGHTFOOT.

### XIII

#### THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY : IS IT A PRIESTHOOD ?

WE come now to the difficult and involved question of the Christian ministry and the claim you make that it has a specifically priestly character. The question is difficult, because the further we penetrate into "Catholic doctrine" the more do we seem to part with the New Testament as our authority and to be referred to inferences, combinations and presuppositions, the true value of which it is almost impossible to assign.

Let me point out at once that I am not concerned to deny that our Lord appointed men to minister to His Church—to preach, to baptize and to give counsel and guidance. Whether this ministry was temporary or permanent, even in the case of those whom He Himself appointed, is indeed a moot question, especially since the publication of Dr. Hort's Lectures on the *Christian Ecclesia*. But what we require to see proved is that they were in any sense of the word

priests, and that they had authority from the Lord to transmit their priesthood to others.

By priest I understand you to mean a man set apart from his fellows by ordination who has thereby received a peculiar grace, and whose intervention is *necessary* to the proper worship of God, and *necessary* for the bestowal upon other men of God's covenanted grace. You say that a Christian minister is in this sense a priest, and that one who is not in this sense a priest is not a Christian minister at all. He "takes upon himself this office," he is an interloper, a pretender; he may be compared unto Korah. It matters little that he brings many souls to God, that week by week he is building up and edifying a body of devout believers. He may have every possible seal to his ministry, but if he have not the seal of episcopal ordination, he is a contemptible sham, his Church is a "preaching-shop."

I am aware that this language would be regarded by many of your party as violent and unjust; but none the less it is common. It represents the tone of most of your journals, hundreds of your pulpits, and a countless number of your sermons.

How much you stake on this conviction of yours! It is not only the validity of your own Sacraments that depends on it, the certainty of your own access to God, but also your denial that our worship and

Sacraments are valid. What a price you pay for it, when it becomes the justification of so much disdain, contempt and hostility towards so many of your brethren in Christ !

And what if your conviction should be a mistaken one ? It cannot be ; you can prove it up to the hilt ! You can show, of course, that there is not a weak or broken link in the chain of succession that unites your ministry to the Source of this priestly grace. You can show that He appointed men to be priests, "ordained" them to the office, and gave them power to transmit the grace and office together ! And He said that only those ordained in due succession to these first priests had for ever the *right* to speak in God's name to man, the *right* to offer man's worship to God !

I turn to your books and your sermons for the proof of these things.

And what is the first thing I find ? It is the admission that in the New Testament a Christian minister is never called a priest. It is true, of course, and Bishop Lightfoot for one has stated it in unmistakable terms. In the only places in the New Testament where the status or function of priest is ascribed to men, it is ascribed to the whole body of believers. *They* are "an holy priesthood." *They* are "kings and priests to God." The priesthood, so far

as it is continued at all, has become universal in the Church ; so far as it had been specialized in a class, it is at an end. The Spirit of consecration who descended upon the Church at Pentecost descended upon all alike, Apostles and disciples, women as well as men, a hundred and twenty or more ; and among other barriers which were swept away in that baptism of power was the barrier between priest and layman. The prophecy of Joel was fulfilled : “On thy servants and on thy handmaidens I will pour out in those days of My Spirit.” And the sign of it was that they “prophesied.” Free and persuasive speech for God was the seal of their commission and the official function of all members of His Church.<sup>1</sup>

But you seek to turn the edge of this damaging admission by asserting that the absence of the *name* is immaterial.<sup>2</sup> If we do not find the “name” in the New Testament, we find the “thing.” Now, I have tried in vain to find what is meant in this common statement by the “thing.” Is it the priest ? Then we ask, Which of the Apostles appears in the New Testament as a priest ? Is it the priesthood ? Then

<sup>1</sup> See Acts ii. 1, 18 ; and Knowling, in the *Expositor's Greek Testament, ad loc.*

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Sadler, *Church Doctrine Bible Truth*, p. 231 :—“It matters not a straw whether the *name* of priests was given to them.”

where is priesthood ascribed to any Christian minister in the New Testament?

No answer is forthcoming to these questions, but apparently the "thing" means those functions which in combination make up, according to your judgment, the priesthood. For what we find is an analysis of the functions of a priest, and the assertion that those functions were specially committed by Christ to His Apostles.

This is Mr. Sadler's method. We will, if you please, follow his argument.

His preliminary investigation (pp. 215-228) may be dismissed at once. No one disputes that the Old Testament dispensation includes a system of sacrificial atonement mediated by priests.

But even in the Old Testament the axe was laid to the root of the tree. The prophets as a class were critics, some of them were fierce denouncers, of the priestly system. And their criticism was not merely of the priests as individuals in their private character and unworthiness, but of the system itself, as you will see if you examine such well-known passages as Hosea vi. 6, Micah vi. 8, Isaiah i. 11-17, Jeremiah vii. 21-23, Psalm li. 16, 17.

And, while a sharp conflict is thus disclosed within the Old Testament itself between the priestly and prophetic conceptions of religion, we can have no

doubt which of these we are to accept, seeing that our Saviour Himself definitely attached His teaching and His sympathy to the prophets and their message, in distinction from the priests and their system.

He hailed as the forerunner of His own ministry one who was emphatically not a priest but a prophet.

He permitted Himself to use invectives against the priests, and He traced the blindness and hardness of heart among the priests and Pharisees to the very fact that they had not learned the lesson of the prophets' criticism. “Go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice.”<sup>1</sup>

These considerations, while affording strong presumption against a priestly ministry in Christ's Church, prove that nothing can be learnt from the Old Testament concerning the nature of priesthood which has any weight in this discussion. The conclusion to which it brings us is at best, in Mr. Sadler's own words (p. 225), “If God has ordained it, it may be so at the present time.” But that, of course, is the question : Has God ordained it now ?

<sup>1</sup> As an illustration of the way in which Scripture is handled by writers of your school, I transcribe without comment Canon Knox Little's allusion to this text. “‘I will have mercy and not sacrifice,’ i.e. ‘I will have sacrifice, but not without mercy’ is God's way in dealing with His people” (*Sacerdotalism*, p. 291).

The proof that our Lord appointed a ministry is, as I have said, not a proof that He ordained a priesthood. That He empowered or commissioned certain men to go forth and preach the Gospel, to baptize, and to declare with some authority what was the will of God, will not be disputed. It is in what lies beyond this that we find the question at issue.

Mr. Sadler shows some ingenuity in asking and answering questions which do not touch this point and in avoiding those that do. Thus (p. 231) he enquires: "Did their powers exceed, or come short of, the powers of those men who in former dispensations had been called priests?" Whereas the real question is: Did their powers *include*, or were they identical with, the powers of those who had been called priests?

Answering his own question, he finds that "Christ commissioned His Apostles to do four things: to preach, to baptize, to administer the Lord's Supper, and to absolve." At the end of his proof that this was so, he says that it is clear that ministers were delegated by Christ Himself to exercise the highest sacerdotal functions.

Sacerdotal functions! When was it the function of a priest to preach? If it is the function of an office at all, it is the function of the prophet; and the priest has rather been conspicuous at all times by his

indifference to preaching. When was it the characteristic mark of a priest to baptize? Was John the Baptist a priest? He preached and baptized, and (apparently) heard men confess their sins. No other man of whom we read in the New Testament comes so near to fulfilling Mr. Sadler's conditions, and probably no man was so radically alienated from all that is priestly.

It is plain that neither preaching nor baptizing has about it anything specifically sacerdotal. They can contribute nothing to the building up of the “thing” whose name is wanting in the New Testament.

There remain the powers to “administer the Lord’s Supper” and “to absolve.”

“To administer the Lord’s Supper.” I pray you notice how an altogether new idea, and one foreign to the words of institution is introduced by the use of this word. When did our Lord give commission to any individual to “administer” the Supper? He spoke to a body of men, and He bade them as a body of men, “Do this in remembrance of Me.” When you say, “Our Lord empowered His Apostles to celebrate the Lord’s Supper,” you say in modern language what is true. It is otherwise when you say that He commissioned an Apostle or the Apostles individually to “administer.” You are reading into His words the ideas of a much later period. You have absolutely

no justification for thus individualizing the commission. There is no record in the New Testament of an Apostle or any one else administering the Sacrament. What we do see is believers meeting to break bread, the Church commemorating its Lord. And, if you say some one must have presided, you have no reason to assert that it was necessarily an Apostle, or one marked out from his fellows by any other qualification than possibly age or character.<sup>1</sup>

To prove from the Lord's Supper that the Apostles were priests, you have to show that :

<sup>1</sup> An interesting testimony against this individualizing of the Commission is found in the Coptic Liturgy, "where the people generally by their responses are clearly shown to take a part and share in the consecration prayer" (A. C. Headlam, in the Oxford discussion on *Priesthood and Sacrifice*, p. 161). Mr. Headlam's further remarks on this point are worth quoting : "The Eastern Church brings out much more clearly than the Western—not only the Roman but the Anglican—that Sacraments are not the work of the priest, but through the priest. 'The seven Sacraments,' a Russian writer tells us, 'are in reality not accomplished by any single individual who is worthy of the mercy of God, but by the whole Church in the person of an individual, though he be unworthy.' So, in the East they do not say, 'I baptize,' but 'So-and-so is baptized.' I think I am right in saying that until the sixteenth century, when it came under Roman influence, the Eastern Church, like the primitive, had no form of absolution which was not a prayer."

1. The Eucharist is a sacrifice, or at least in some sense a specifically priestly act ; and
2. That our Lord commissioned the eleven individually to administer it, or that it was so individually administered on the ground of their commission.

Now, even allowing you this double alternative, you cannot show even the probability of either.

There remains, therefore, as the sole specific mark of the priesthood which might be found in the Apostles, the power to absolve. It is claimed for them that they were appointed as a distinct order of ministry with priestly functions on the ground of John xx. 22.

“ The power to absolve was given in the words, ‘ As My Father sent Me, so send I you ; receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them ; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained ’ ” (p. 238).

In regard to this passage there are two distinct questions to be settled : (1) What does the commission mean ? and (2) To whom was it addressed ?

Let us take the second point first. Whatever the commission may mean, it was plainly not addressed to the Apostles as Apostles ; for two reasons :

(a) The Apostle Thomas was absent when it was conferred. But no one will suggest that Thomas was not an Apostle like the other ten. And what was not

essential to the apostleship in his case cannot be regarded as an essential mark of the apostleship in the others.

(b) Others beside the ten Apostles were present. This is not stated in the context, but it may be inferred with great probability from a comparison with St. Luke xxiv. 33.

(c) The probability that this authority, whatever it involved, was bestowed upon the ten in a representative capacity or upon others besides the ten, is largely increased by the fact that similar authority was promised or conferred by the Saviour on two other occasions; and on one occasion the recipient was an individual, on the other the whole body of the disciples.

In the first case Jesus says unto Peter, “I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”

In the second case He says to *His disciples*, “Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”

The three passages must be studied together. All three refer to the same authority—authority, namely, to give a binding decision concerning sin. On whom, then, is it conferred? It is announced in the first in-

stance to Peter on the ground of his great confession. Not, however, to Peter individually, but to Peter as representative of the Church. This, you maintain, as firmly as we do, against Rome. And we are justified by the fact that in the next instance Jesus, speaking to the assembled disciples, confers on them the same authority, without limitation to any individual or to any class. In the third case (John xx.) there is no indication whatever of our Lord's intention to restrict this authority to a narrower circle than that on which it was already bestowed, or to distribute it to special individuals.

On the contrary there is a plain indication of His assigning to this authority a scope as wide as the Church. The commission follows on the words, “Receive ye the Holy Ghost.” The commission, therefore, is directly, we may say instrumentally, connected with this gift, concerning which this is certain, that it is as universal as the faith which claims it. Whatever power is conferred by this commission, it is conferred through the indwelling of the Holy Ghost; and that is the prerogative of no official class of Christians, but of the whole body, the Church.

We may now ask, What is this power? The power of the keys, the power to bind and loose, the power to remit and retain sins?

We have seen that it resides not in any individual,

not in any number of individuals, not in any official class or caste, but in the Church as a whole.<sup>1</sup>

It is the power to exercise spiritual discipline, to admit to and exclude from the visible Church, to declare what is for Christians right or wrong, to declare authoritatively the conditions upon which sin is remitted and forgiven. It gives no power to any individual man to remit the sins of another or to declare that they are remitted ; for the forgiveness of sins depends, according to the entire testimony of the Gospel, upon the fulfilment of certain inward conditions. It depends on repentance and faith, whose presence in another's heart no man can with certainty ascertain. “Who knoweth the deep things of a man,

<sup>1</sup> That the power of discipline was by the early Church understood to reside in the Church or congregation itself, and not in any one or in all of its officials, is plain from St. Paul's manner of dealing with the Corinthian offender. The Apostle calls upon the Church to act, and to act as a whole, and to pass what was equivalent to a sentence of excommunication. When the offender had repented, he similarly invites the whole body of Christians to grant what was equivalent to absolution, remarking : “Sufficient to such a one is this punishment which was inflicted by the many.”

That the consciousness and the practice of the Church remained the same until a much later date is shown, for example, by Tertullian, who speaks of excommunication as an act of the congregation, presided over by “particular approved elders” (*Apologeticus*, p. 39).

save the spirit that is in man?" And so even the strongest upholders of the doctrine of absolution admit that priestly absolution is conditional, conditional on faith which is real and repentance which is genuine. And the worst feature of the system is that in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred the penitent receives as absolute what the honest confessor knows to be only conditional. The conscience through which God is speaking to a man is actually silenced by a human voice giving an assurance which may be groundless.

It is true also that the authority thus committed to the Church is conditional. The validity of her decisions must at all times and in all cases depend upon the harmony of her perception and her judgment with the mind of Christ. But this is of less importance to you, because both in theory and in practice you actually deprive the Church of the authority which Christ committed unto her. She is silenced. For you provide no means or method in your system by which the mind of the Church can be expressed. Neither the congregation, nor the diocese, nor the National Church can make itself heard or exercise the authority divinely committed to it by Christ. Even those who speak in the Church's name do not speak with her voice.

The situation is indeed a serious one for your

Church. It is described thus by an authoritative writer of your own party : "The conclusion may seem an ignominious one for the Church of England, but at all events it is better for us to face facts than to burke them, and the fact seems unquestionably to be that with the present relations of Church and State spiritual discipline is an impossibility."<sup>1</sup> By your own showing Christ bestowed a certain power upon His Church. Your contention against the Protestants is that that power is an essential quality in the ministry and government of the Church, and yet on your own confession you yourselves have ceased to exercise it, could not exercise it if you would. On the other hand, the Churches which are not Episcopalian and not Established have this power, and exercise it. Or some of them, indeed, it is true that they became Dissenters with all the drawbacks of the position precisely because they held this power to be essential to the Church, and would not surrender it.

Since writing the above I have observed Bishop Westcott's exposition of this passage, and am pleased to find how closely it corresponds with the view which I have adopted.

Dr. Westcott's conclusions are as follows :

1. The words are not addressed to all the Apostles,

<sup>1</sup> See *Church Times*, 1896, p. 258.

nor to the Apostles alone. Thomas was absent ; and there were others assembled with the Apostles, as we learn from St. Luke. His commission and the promise were given therefore, like the Pentecostal blessing which they prefigured, to the Christian Society and not to any special order in it.

2. The power which is described deals with sin and not with the punishment of sin. In essence it has nothing to do with discipline. It belongs to the spiritual world : and in regard to this it manifests the Divine will and does not determine it.

3. The forgiveness and the retention of sins is represented as following from the impartation of a new being. The breathing upon the disciples recalls, even in the word used to express it, that act of creative energy whereby God breathed into the first man the breath of life.

4. The gift is conveyed once for all. No provision is laid down for its transmission. It is made part of the life of the whole society, flowing from the relation of the body to the risen Christ. Thus the words are, I repeat, the charter of the Christian Church, and not simply the charter of the Christian ministry.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Revelation of the Risen Lord*, p. 82. (See also Dr. Westcott's **Commentary, ad loc.**)

Thus in the New Testament we find neither the “name” nor the “thing.” Of the four parts or functions among which the “thing” is supposed to be distributed, each one proves, on examination, to pertain not to any class, but to the whole body, the Church. In so far as any of them, such as preaching, were necessarily exercised by an individual, his right went with his power, and he owed his power to the gift of the Holy Spirit which he received “not from men neither by men.” Christianity, according to the mind of its Founder, is a “priestless religion.”

And so it remained for two centuries. You will find the proofs in any modern and unbiased history of the period. Here is the verdict of Harnack : “The consummation of the ‘Old-Catholic’ conception of the Church, as it was achieved in the second half of the third century, is most clearly shown in the quality of priesthood, which was ascribed to the clergy, and endowed it with the highest importance.” “It is impossible to prove that before the end of the second century the leaders of Churches were at any place in Church circles called ‘priests’ without further qualification.” “Tertullian was the first to call the Bishop ‘summus sacerdos’ ; but he did this at first in such a way as to show that he was ‘playing’ with the idea. We can only conclude from his works that before

the year A.D. 200 the word ‘priest’ was not yet in common use for the bishop or the presbyters in Carthage.”<sup>1</sup>

Thus the first two centuries contribute as little evidence in favour of your theory of the priesthood of the Christian Ministry as the New Testament itself. Its origin can be traced to the general recrudescence of Judaic ideas and partly to the influence of pagan worship. Individual and mediatorial priesthood indubitably belongs to the circle of ideas which had been transcended by Christianity.

<sup>1</sup> Harnack, *Dogmengeschichte*, p. 383 and note.

## CHURCH GOVERNMENT

“ I could never find but that God had left the like liberty to the Church government as He hath done to the civil government, to be varied according to time and place and accidents, which nevertheless His high and Divine providence doth order and dispose.”—**LORD BACON.**

## XIV

### CHURCH GOVERNMENT

I AM not surprised that you should draw my attention so pointedly to Mr. Sadler's chapter on Church Government. It is, as any one would admit, a very clever plea for the Episcopal system as an order of government divinely appointed, and, further, as the *only* order which can make that claim. I call it a plea, for it is a plea rather than a proof. Could the conclusion at which he arrives be established upon some independent grounds, these pages of his book might be very useful to you as providing confirmatory evidence. Or were the facts which Mr. Sadler overlooks different from what they are, these pages might serve to lead up to them by establishing an *a priori* probability in favour of the Episcopal system. But facts have a way of looking "before and after," and the actual organization of the Church as we find it at the close of the first century, to which Mr. Sadler pays no attention, explains much in the New Testament

which he finds puzzling, and upsets conclusions which he finds clear.

His method is vitiated from the beginning by the entire absence of method in his investigations. He has no eye for the literary history of the New Testament. He makes the Acts follow the Gospels and the Epistles the Acts as though that represented the true chronological order. He recognises no difference in the situation reflected in the Pastoral Epistles from that in the Epistles to the Corinthians. It is not too much to say that such a method renders hopeless the attainment of a just conclusion. It is simply to ignore the results of New Testament scholarship in the last half century.

But even the conclusions which he draws from this uncritical handling of the documents fall very far short of the case he seeks to prove, namely that the government of the Church was from the first Episcopal, or “government centred in one man.”

It may be convenient to set forth the successive conclusions at which he arrives.

1. Ministerial agency and authority must be a principle of Christ’s kingdom (p. 293).

This is simply to say that society within the Church is to be organized on the same principle as society at large, namely that character and qualification will obtain influence and authority.

2. "Christ altogether ignored any such theory as that all ecclesiastical power is invested in the people, and that ministers, when exercising their functions, are only the delegates of the people, for mere order's sake doing what the whole body of believers cannot conveniently do" (*Ibid.*).

Or, "All authority and discipline is from above, not from beneath" (p. 296).

This is partly true and partly false, as we shall see later.

Meanwhile, I may simply put in contrast with the whole trend of his argument the following sentence from Canon Gore :

"The sacred ministry received indeed its authority from above, and acts in God's name as God's representative; but the man who is to minister is the elect of the people, and is their representative also. Thus the Apostles ordained the first deacons, but the Church elected them."

"So in the sub-apostolic Church Clement speaks of the presbyter-bishops as ordained from above, but *with the consent of the whole Church*, and in such a way as to suggest that, under certain circumstances, they were not exempt from the judgment of the Church."<sup>1</sup>

3. "Respecting the ministry and authority of

<sup>1</sup> Gore, *Church and Ministry*, p. 91.

elders we are told nothing whatsoever" [in the Acts] (p. 300).

This is a serious misstatement or oversight, as you will see by examining Acts xi. 30, xiv. 23, and xv. *passim*. It will suffice to contrast with Mr. Sadler's statement the summary of the situation as given by Mr. Allen :

"The general impression which is given by these writings of the second generation is that a class of men have come into prominence in the administration of the local Churches who are called presbyters or elders."

"The presbyters are associated with the Apostles in the government of the Church in Jerusalem, as if they stood on an equal footing."<sup>1</sup>

Holding this peculiar conception, it is no wonder that Mr. Sadler finds "a number of now insoluble questions" arising out of the record of the Council at Jerusalem (Acts xv.). These are the very questions which ought to have put him on the right track. "What authority," he asks, "had the 'elders' and 'brethren' in Jerusalem to bind upon the 'brethren' of Cilicia abstinence from things strangled, and to loose them from the obligation of the Mosaic law? The Apostles had undoubted authority to do so, but

<sup>1</sup> Allen, *Christian Institutions*, p. 38.

surely not the 'elders' and 'brethren of a local Church.' ”

Why not? Only because their doing so does not square with his theory; only because the government of the Church was in the hands, not of the Apostles alone, but of the Apostles and elders and brethren.

4. What then is the value of the statement to which these lead up: “The few notices of its organization and government all teach one principle, viz. Apostolic rule merging into episcopal”?

He now comes to St. Paul, whose apostleship is indeed a serious obstacle to his theory.

“His Apostolic commission came, as he expressly states, ‘not of men, neither by men’—*i.e.* not by popular election, or by designation of the other Apostles—but directly from Christ.”

Quite so; but if “popular election” is excluded by St. Paul’s account of his apostleship, so also is ordination (and not merely designation) by the other Apostles. St. Paul was called to the ministry by the voice of the risen Lord. He was ordained to the ministry, so far as men had anything to do with his ordination, by those who were not Apostles (Acts xiii. 1-3).

The truth is, the apostleship of St. Paul was a type of the very ministry which you wish to exclude from the Christian Church. All his elaborate proofs and

vehement assertions of the genuineness of his apostleship go to demonstrate that which you deny, the possibility that without apostolic or episcopal ordination a man may be a true minister of the true Church. We may therefore gratefully accept all the evidence Mr. Sadler brings forward to show that St. Paul exercised the authority of an Apostle ; for he exercised it on the ground that he had been called to the ministry by Christ, and ordained to it by men who were not Apostles at all.

5. “There is not one word in any Epistle of any organization in any Church which would remove that Church for any purpose from under St. Paul’s supervision, or make it independent of his authority. We have no word of any bishop, or local presbytery, or synod, or periodical conference or chapter possessing independent authority.”

This might, of course, be a case where we have not the name but the “thing.” But it is not even that, for in the Council at Jerusalem we have a very remarkable instance of the Church as a whole convening for discussion, hearing what was said, and deciding what should be done. St. Paul at that Council addressed, not the Apostles merely, but “all the multitude”; he submitted to a decision which was come to by the assembled Church, a decision which went forth in the name, ‘not of the

Apostles alone, but of “the Apostles and elders and brethren.”

Passing to the Pastoral Epistles, we come to documents which are supposed to establish what is so essential to your theory, namely the transmission of apostolic and episcopal authority from St. Paul to individual men.

6. “They totally omit to give any intimation that this authority was to cease, and to be superseded by some more oligarchical or so-called ‘democratic’ form.”

It is at least equally important to observe that “they totally omit to give any intimation that this authority is to” be continued, and to be continued in a particular way, through individual men ruling as diocesan or monarchical bishops. The only passage that even looks that way is the reminder to Titus that he had been charged to “ordain elders in every city.” And there is no question that the “elders” who are here referred to, whether or not they are also known as “bishops,” exercised their office and authority, not as monarchical bishops, but as members of a Council or Board of Elders, the “Presbytery” (*cf. 2 Tim. i. 6*).

The “more oligarchical or so-called ‘democratic’ form” was already in existence. What is wholly lacking in the New Testament, even in the Pastoral

Epistles, is authority for the monarchical or diocesan form of the Episcopate which succeeded it.

Timothy himself is never called a bishop ; neither is he addressed as an Apostle. He is most properly described as an Evangelist, an itinerating missionary of the Gospel, whom St. Paul instructed, and authorized to organize new Christian communities precisely on the lines upon which he himself had organized them, putting them in charge of a body of local “elders” or “presbyter-bishops.”

Mr. Sadler makes the indisputable assertion that these Epistles make no provision for the future exercise of Apostolic authority “in synods of presbyters, all officially equal, and deciding their differences by a majority of votes.” It would be equally pertinent to remark that they “make no provision” for the government of the Church by two Houses of Convocation and a House of Laymen, all unequal, and two of them without any authority at all. You cannot prove the presence of one system by proving the absence of the other in the Pastoral Epistles or in the New Testament as a whole. Undoubtedly this is the very point in the history where it is natural to look for evidence of the transmission of Apostolic authority, if such transmission took place. But to look is not to find, and the simple fact remains that St. Paul gives no instructions for the transmission of

any sole power to single men, a thing which would be incredible were the transmission, as you think it, of absolutely essential moment to the Church.

Thus the elaborate proof led by Mr. Sadler and others that St. Paul empowered Timothy, and to some extent Titus also, to exercise authority, to ordain, to rebuke and so forth, is either unnecessary or it is inconclusive. It is unnecessary if it only leads to the inference that these men and others like them, acting as missionaries and evangelists, were instructed by their Father in the Gospel to organize the Churches which they visited or founded on the lines which he himself had followed, and to use the authority of the Spirit whom they had received in checking abuses and reproofing sin.

The proof is perfectly inconclusive if you seek to draw therefrom the inference that on these men and on these men alone had been conferred the right to govern large areas of the Church with *autocratic* power, or to confer a ministerial status otherwise unattainable. No one now asserts that either Timothy or Titus ranked as an Apostle ; the suggestion that either the one or the other was a bishop, except possibly one of several presbyter-bishops, has no evidence in its favour, and is abandoned by scholars. There is no evidence that they held either permanent tenure or local connection. This is the

conclusion of Professor Gwatkin, than whom no one has a better right to be heard.

“Timothy and Titus have no permanent office, and Titus moreover is not connected with any particular city. They are not bishops, but vicars-apostolic, sent in the Apostle’s place on special missions at Ephesus and in Crete. The letters by which we know them are letters of recall (2 Tim. iv. 9; Tit. iii. 12), and there is no serious evidence that they ever saw Ephesus and Crete again.”<sup>1</sup>

At this point Mr. Sadler has a note which is little less than amazing, and must seriously affect our opinion of his work. It would indeed be difficult to put together in the same space a greater number of inaccuracies. He asserts that Presbyterianism is “oligarchical rather than democratic.” It is neither. It is, like our British Constitution, a representative democracy. The blunder is explained, though it can hardly be excused, when we read further: “In the form in which we are best acquainted with it—*i.e.* Wesleyan Methodism—it appears as a strict oligarchy.” It is little wonder that one who takes Wesleyan Methodism to be a representative form of Presbyterianism should be entirely wrong in his estimate of the latter. Further, the Wesleyan “Legal

<sup>1</sup> See H. M. Gwatkin in *The Church Past and Present*, p. 168.

Hundred" may be "perfectly irresponsible," but the scope of their power is limited, and they are actually elected by the annual Conference. As to the Congregational Churches, we are told that "in these bodies all power is vested in the deacons, as representatives of the people"; whereas the specific feature of Congregationalism lies precisely in this, that "all power" is vested, not in any representatives, but in the local Congregation itself. It is only natural to ask, What confidence can be placed in other statements of a writer who shows himself at once so reckless and so ill-informed?

7. The chapter closes with that which might have been looked for at the beginning, viz. an examination of the names and functions actually ascribed by the New Testament to officers of the Church. But we find this unexpectedly brief and cursory, the reason alleged being that here again the "name" is immaterial, while the "thing" or principle is all-important. We may be sure that if Mr. Sadler could have proved that a bishop in the modern or mediæval sense of the word was regarded by New Testament writers as essential to the existence of a true Church, he would have proved it;<sup>1</sup> and, as he does not

<sup>1</sup> That the attempt would not be likely to succeed may be gathered from Mr. Gwatkin's summing up of the case:

attempt it, we may fairly conclude that he saw it to be impossible, as indeed it is.

But surely in this case, if in no other, the *name* and proof of its use in your sense is all-important to you. To us who maintain that no specific form of Church government can derive exclusive authority from the New Testament the presence or absence of the name matters not at all. But, seeing that it is by the “bishop” and his government that your theory of the Church stands or falls, you cannot afford to admit that there was a time when bishop and presbyter were convertible terms, when Episcopacy was “in commission”; for Episcopacy in commission is Presbyterianism.

These points practically constitute the whole of Mr. Sadler’s argument by which he would establish Episcopacy as the sole divinely appointed or divinely permitted form of Church government. It appears, on examination, that all of them are open to criticism

“These appear to be the only instances by which serious persons have endeavoured to prove the existence of the bishop from the New Testament, and the proof seems in each case a failure. But if the necessity of Episcopal government cannot be proved by Scripture, we are bound, on the principles of the Church of England, to deny that it belongs to the essence of a lawful Church, however legitimate and useful it may be.” (See *The Church Past and Present*, p. 168.)

and suspicion of uncertainty. But even if all these points could be established, it is plain that they come far short of proving that Episcopacy is either Scriptural or essential to the Church's being.

There is another point on which stress is often laid, though not by Mr. Sadler, namely the *manner* in which, according to the New Testament, men were set apart for the ministerial office. In several cases we learn that it was done by the "laying on of hands." It is often suggested, and sometimes asserted, that in this ceremony, when performed by a duly authorized person, *i.e.* a bishop, there is an impartation of special and supernatural grace for the ministry or priesthood.

The case most commonly appealed to is that of Timothy. Writing to him, St. Paul says : "Till I come give heed to reading, to exhortation, to teaching ; neglect not the gift which is in thee by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery" (1 Tim. iv. 13, 14) ; and again : "Stir up the gift of God which is in thee through the laying on of my hands" (2 Tim. i. 6).

Now these two passages must be read together. They refer to the same occasion. The gift to which they refer was one which Timothy received through the laying on of hands, not by the Apostle only, but by him and the assembled elders or presbyters. The

gift, therefore, did not necessarily reside in the Apostle alone. Nor was the gift conferred by the laying on of hands alone. Its primary condition was not the ordination but the “prophecy.” Comparing a third passage bearing on the subject (1 Tim. i. 18), we find that Timothy must have been in the first instance designated for office by the voice of a Christian prophet or prophets. It was this designation by prophecy which constituted the Divine call to the ministry, and was recognised and sealed by the joint action of St. Paul and the local presbyters.

Nor is this merely a “Protestant” way of explaining the passage. It was thus that Chrysostom, for example, understood what occurred.

Further, you must bear in mind what is plainly suggested as to the character of “the gift.” There is no indication that it had anything to do with either the administration of Sacraments or the conferring of Orders. The gift which Timothy was not to neglect was to be exercised in the public reading of the Scriptures, in public exhortation and teaching—in a word, in preaching.

The truth is, “the laying on of hands” was, and might remain, a simple and impressive way of signifying the direction in which men invoked the grace of God by prayer. It was a natural accompaniment of any act of blessing, as when Jacob laid his hand upon

the heads of Joseph's children, as when Peter and John laid their hands upon the Samaritan converts, when they "prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost." Thus Ananias laid his hands on St. Paul when restoring him his sight; St. Paul his hands on Publius when healing him of the fever; and, in general, hands were to be laid on the sick. It was not the action, however, but the prayer of fervent faith which it accompanied which was to save them. There is thus no reason whatever to assume an invariable connection between the laying on of hands and the impartation of any particular grace. The one effective agency underlying the symbolic action is always prayer; and its results must be governed by the same general conditions as those which concern prayer itself.

You need not imagine that this is merely a "Protestant" way of explaining the ceremonial. Augustine asks regarding the laying on of hands, "What is it more than a prayer offered over a man?"<sup>1</sup> and again, emphasizing the power of Christ alone to confer the Holy Spirit, he says: "None of His disciples gave the Holy Ghost. They prayed indeed that He might come on those on whom they were laying hands; they did not themselves give Him—a custom which

<sup>1</sup> *De Bapt. c. Donat.*, bk. v., xxiii. 33.

the Church in the case of its officers maintains until to-day.”<sup>1</sup>

And Leo XIII. has shown that the (Roman) Catholic Church at least attaches little importance to the action : “The imposition of hands by itself signifies nothing definite, and is equally used for several Orders and for Confirmation.”

Ought you not therefore to make it very plain to your people that the laying on of hands does not in itself confer grace ; that it is not “Catholic teaching” that it does so ? The superstitious significance which many of your party ignorantly seek to attach to it causes many Protestants to shrink from the practice. They are not unnaturally afraid of encouraging similar ideas among unthinking onlookers. But, seeing that it is Scriptural and also the expression of a natural impulse, I hope they will resist the temptation to abandon it.

\* \* \* \* \*

Much more might be said did space permit, but let this suffice. Mr. Sadler fails to prove what he sets out to prove ; and even what he sets out to prove falls fatally short of what you so loudly assert, that the Episcopate is so essential to the Church that without it there can be no true Church at all.

<sup>1</sup> *De Trin.*, xv. 26, 46.

He sets out, and fails, to prove :

1. That the Apostles, either as a corporation or as individuals, exercised absolute authority in the Church ; the history of the Council at Jerusalem is alone sufficient to contradict that.
2. That St. Paul transmitted by ordination or otherwise to any individuals authority to rule absolutely in the Church, or in any sense established a monarchical Episcopate.
3. That Timothy or Titus, or any one else ordained by, or with concurrence of, St. Paul, recognised either his power or duty to transmit any authority he possessed, or, in fact, transmitted any authority to any one.

But even supposing that the case were otherwise, supposing that these things were proved to the hilt, you would not have proved that authority for government resided *only* in these men and in those to whom they might transmit it. We might admit all Mr. Sadler's positions, and would readily do so if they could be established. They would prove no more than that Episcopacy is a legitimate form of Church government. But we might still maintain incontrovertibly that to the Churches also, the local communities of Christians, was entrusted power, which they exercised, of discipline, election and self-government, power in which their officials shared only as influential members. And, were we so disposed, we

might go further, and assert that no Church is truly Catholic which denies its due share of government to the laity.

But, quite apart from all these uncertainties and difficulties connected with the “historic Episcopate,” there is a further consideration by which you are faced. Episcopacy is not a form of Church government at all. It is not a form of government for the Church, but only for a diocese. If, therefore, Episcopacy be the sole legitimate form of Church government, then either the Church must be regarded as one vast diocese under one bishop, which is practically the theory of the Papacy, or you have in reality as many Churches as you have dioceses. When you are asked by what nexus your dioceses are connected, what form of government holds them together as a Church, your theory provides you with no answer. If divergences in doctrine or practice should arise in different dioceses, your system provides you with no remedy. A General Council of the whole Church you will never get ; in the Privy Council of the State you very properly decline to see the final arbiter of the Church in spiritual matters ; a council of bishops is a court without precedent and without authority ; and the archbishops are not likely to try again either to legislate or to interpret the law of the Church. What then is your government ?

You may speak of the Church of England as organized in “two provinces”; but that is either a merely voluntary arrangement by the bishops, a kind of Diocesan Union, or it has a purely civil and political basis. In either case, it is wholly lacking in Scriptural and Divine sanction.

If you appeal to the authority of the mediæval Church for the arrangement, the same authority demands that your two provinces should submit to the universal Bishop of Rome. In fact, on your own theory, the Church of England consists of two provinces of the Catholic Church in revolt, and, because in revolt and separated from the main body, incompetent to legislate even for itself. Where, then, is your “Church government”?

You have it neither in theory nor in practice. One of the bishops recently gave us a naïve answer to these questions: “Our Church,” he said, “is a self-going concern.” This may be a true description at the moment, but it is hardly consistent with the claim to be the only true Church in this realm. And the moment this mysterious mechanism goes wrong or stops, what becomes of your Church?

You cannot appeal to the law. That would be to recognise the Church as a creature of the State. And you are not an Erastian.

You cannot put your trust in “public opinion” to

put errant bishops right, for then you put the Church under the heel of the plebs. You are not prepared to say, *vox populi vox Dei*.

Do you not see that this theory of Church government must be wrong because it is so woefully incomplete? It is, and must always remain, incomplete without a pope. Given a Church without power of self-government and with monarchical bishops, and you have a Church which lies between the Scylla of Erastianism and the Charybdis of a Papacy. Your situation to-day provides a most instructive parallel to that of the Church in the fifth century, and goes far to explain how the Papal theory and power developed as of sheer necessity from this so-called Catholic theory of the Church.

It is far from being my wish to see you driven either into sheer Erastianism or into a Papacy old or new. My hope is to bring you to see that it is your theory that is wrong. It is neither true nor is it workable. It fails to provide the very thing whereof it boasts—a government for the Church.

Two provinces in revolt!

## CHURCH AND MINISTRY

“For even at Alexandria from the time of Mark the Evangelist until the episcopate of Heraklas and Dionysius the presbyter always named as bishop one of their own number chosen by themselves, and set him in a more exalted position, just as an army elects a general or as deacons appoint one of themselves, whom they knew to be diligent, and call him archdeacon.”—JEROME.

## XV

### CHURCH AND MINISTRY

“WE shall form a wrong idea if we think of the growth of the Christian ministry, with its accompaniments, after the manner of a written constitution, in which certain leading principles are recognised from the outset, and carried out in detail with logical precision. The Christian ministry, like most other administrative forms, it is probable, rather grew than was made ; and that by a process which, if we could have seen it, we should very likely have described as quite simple and natural, though, because natural, it is not to be supposed that it is any the less providential.”<sup>1</sup>

These wise words of Professor Sanday are equally true of the Christian ministry and of Church government. And if they are true, it is clear that Mr. Sadler goes on altogether wrong lines in his investigation of the Scriptural basis of Church government. The

<sup>1</sup> Sanday, *The Conception of Priesthood*, p. 58.

evidence he collects is evidence of the obvious, viz. that, like every other society, the Church must have some organization—that there must be those who teach, those who lead, those who for some reason or other have the pre-eminence ; and, on the other hand, those who are taught, led, and controlled. But “influence is one thing, office is another.” There is almost no limit to the influence which is inevitably exercised by those who first lead men to the knowledge of Jesus Christ. It comes to them, not because of any office which they hold, but because of the Holy Spirit by whom they are manifestly endued “with power from on high” (2 Cor. v. 11). As it is now in the infant Churches of the mission field, so it was at first in the primitive Christian community. Questions regarding any merely human source of authority simply did not arise. Offices or officers came into existence through the specialization of the ministry, which was the heritage of the whole Church. “There are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all” (1 Cor. xii. 6). Behind all the manifold forms of ministerial activity—preaching, teaching, dispensing Sacraments, distributing charity, ruling or administering—there was recognised one, and only one, enabling grace—the gift of the Holy Spirit.

As Canon Armitage Robinson has said : “Church

order is from the beginning a sacred growth directed by the constant presence within of the Holy Spirit, so as to meet the needs of a living and multiplying society. It is not a scheme delivered by the Lord to the Apostles, and by the Apostles to the Church ; the body of the Christ is an organism rather than an organization."

An investigation of the government of the Church, as it is outlined in the New Testament, must begin from the positive statements regarding its officers and their functions such as one finds in 1 Corinthians xii. 28 or Romans xii. 6. (These passages Mr. Sadler strangely overlooks.)

The following is an authoritative description of the Christian ministry in the Apostolic age :

"God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers ; after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues."

From this passage three things are plain, and there is nothing elsewhere to contradict them :

1. The officers of the Church of every kind are Divinely appointed ; this applies not only to the Apostles, but "prophets" and "rulers" and all the rest derived their appointment *and* authority with equal directness from the same Source.

2. There are clearly indicated two distinct grades

of ministry—one, the higher, whose function is chiefly exercised through speech, the other consisting of those whose function is exercised in action, such as healing, ruling, administering affairs.

3. These grades are further classified, as it appears, according to dignity or importance—“first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers.”

It is further to be observed that the names of those officers who afterwards became all-important—bishops, priests and deacons—are alike conspicuous by their absence.

Now the question you have to answer is, Seeing that the bishop is not mentioned here nor yet in the other authoritative list of officials of the Church, in which of these officials are we to find his forerunner, to which of these two main classes is he to be affiliated?

These questions can only be rightly answered by accurately observing the qualifications and the functions ascribed to the “bishop” at his first appearance.

One or two things is certain. Either the bishop was originally the same as a presbyter, and rose to pre-eminence as the president (at first temporary, then permanent) of a senate or board of presbyters, or he was not even a presbyter, but represents one of the lower administrative officers in St. Paul’s list. In

neither case does the bishop derive from the first or superior grade of the ministry ; he does not find his antecedent in either Apostle, prophet, or teacher.

If, as Bishop Lightfoot held, “bishop” and “presbyter” were at one time different titles for the same man, the latter must be regarded as the title of the office, the former rather as a description of one of its functions. It “tells us further that the duty of the presbyter was to exercise oversight.”<sup>1</sup>

But in any case it has become plain through recent investigation of early Christian literature that there was a real distinction between the two grades of the ministry. The one ministered to the Church as a whole—was universal and itinerant. Neither Apostles, prophets, nor teachers exercised a local ministry, or held a local jurisdiction. The other embraced the permanent officials of local congregations, to whom fell the control of their local affairs, and, in the absence of ministers of the other class, the conduct of worship.

The Apostles and prophets moved from place to place, accredited to each local Church by the gifts of

<sup>1</sup> This is the view “advocated by Dr. Hort, and substantially before him by that most scientific of German scholars, Dr. Loofs, of Halle,” and accepted as “most probable” by Professor Sanday (*The Conception of Priesthood*, p. 61).

the Spirit, by the purity of their testimony and the consistency of their lives.

No doubt it was part of the function of this peripatetic ministry to provide for the order and discipline of the Churches which they founded or visited. This they did by appointing a number of officers who were certainly known as presbyters, and probably by the name of bishops also. In some cases the record ascribes the selection of those men to the community, in others to an Apostle or Evangelist. Probably the normal practice was for the people to select, and for the Apostle to confirm the appointment by prayer, with the laying on of hands. But unless the presbyter and the bishop are held to be identical there is no record of any Apostle appointing a man a bishop.

The functions of this local ministry consisting of the presbyters were chiefly administrative. It was only in the absence of an Apostle or prophet that the conduct of public worship and the administration of Sacraments also fell to their charge. But as the itinerating ministry tended to disappear as the local Churches increased and were consolidated, the local officers naturally grew in importance, and their discharge of the higher ministry, which had been the exception, became the rule. At the same time the bishops, whose office, if distinct from that of the presbyters, was even more definitely an office of ad-

ministration, rapidly acquired a leading position as responsible for the local affairs of the community, or (probably) as its representatives in dealing with the civil authority.

It is something less than candid to dismiss this explanation of the development of the Episcopate, as Mr. Sadler does, as "a scheme invented by late German writers." The writers who support it are neither late nor are they only German.

It is outlined in the passage from Jerome, which your authorities so commonly overlook. "Before factions were introduced into religion by the promptings of the devil," the Churches were governed by a council of elders, "but as soon as each man began to consider those whom he baptized belonged to himself, and not to Christ, it was decided throughout the world that one selected from among the elders should be placed over the rest, so that the care of the Church should devolve on him, and the seeds of schism be removed." And again in another passage he writes to the same effect: "When afterwards one presbyter was elected that he might be placed over the rest, this was done as a remedy against schism, that each man might not drag to himself and thus break up the Church of Christ."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from Bishop Lightfoot, *Essay on the Christian Ministry*, p. 206.

And this theory, in some form or other, has the unequivocal support of the best scholars not only of Germany but in your own Church. Bishop Lightfoot wrote : “It is not, therefore, to the Apostle that we must look for the prototype of the bishop.”

And his judgment has been confirmed more recently by Professor Gwatkin, who says : “The change was easy, for the bishop was no successor of the Apostles. The two offices are utterly different. The Apostle is a witness to the world who preaches from city to city, founding and confirming Churches, but never treating any particular city as more than a convenient centre for the work in hand. The bishop is the resident head of a local Church, whose proper business is just the administration with which the Apostle meddles but seldom and unwillingly. In the main, the one office is preaching the word, the other serving tables.”<sup>1</sup>

The bishop of the second century is therefore not the successor of the Apostles. He has an independent origin probably among the presbyters. His powers, at first purely administrative, are enlarged by the ministry of the word as the race of Apostles and prophets dies away. He develops upwards from the presbyterate (or the diaconate). It is not from him

<sup>1</sup> *The Church Past and Present*, p. 174.

that these other officers receive their ordination to office.

Any difference of opinion which there may be among scholars as to the details of this development is immaterial. They are agreed as to the main points. The Church down to A.D. 140, or later, had no fixed or uniform constitution ; the form of government was different in different localities.

“About the year 140 the organization of the Christian communities seems to have been still very diverse in character. Here and there, doubtless, the advantageous arrangement of appointing only one bishop had established itself, while possibly his functions had not yet risen in any important degree, the prophets and teachers still playing the principal part. On the other hand there may have been still in many communities a plurality of bishops, while the prophets and teachers no longer uniformly played a part of any importance.”<sup>1</sup>

In any case the “historic Episcopate” is seen to have been a development, and as such cannot claim for itself *sole* legitimacy and validity as the form of government instituted by our Lord. It must submit, like every other system, to be appraised by its results. It may pertain to the *bene esse* of the Church ; that

<sup>1</sup> Harnack, *Dogmengeschichte*, p. 183.

has to be proved ; but it cannot belong to the *esse* ; for there has been a time when the Church has been without it, and we may fairly conclude that there may now be Churches which lack the Episcopate and are yet true Churches of the living God.

If these be the facts, we are now in a position to consider the two closely related questions of Church government and the Christian ministry.

If the Episcopal system cannot be proved to enjoy the sole sanction of the word of God, no other system claims it. We recognise in the organization and government of the Church one of the matters in which God has left men to the guidance of their reason, sanctified and illumined by the Holy Spirit. And the analogies of nature and of history teach us to expect in the forms of government which appear such variety as arises from adaptation to different needs. The faith in Christ which knit men to Him knit them also to one another. By making them His disciples He formed them into a Society. What He Himself had been while on earth the Holy Spirit came to be after He had gone—the life of this Society. As the life which dwells in nature takes shape in many forms, nay, proves its vigour by the manifoldness of the forms it takes, so the life which dwells in this sacred Society manifests its reality by the plasticity of its form. Were the constitution of the Christian

Church stereotyped in any one form, it would be the only case of such uniformity which comes within our observation.

The various forms of Church government which have actually been evolved correspond in fact with the forms of political organization familiar to us—pure democracy, representative democracy, oligarchy, and autocracy. And to none of them can we admit impediment ; for none of them can we claim a legitimacy which makes illegitimate the rest. Each type, Congregationalist, Presbyterian, Anglican, or Papal, has arisen through special emphasis being laid on some one feature in the organization of the primitive Church.

Viewed merely as organization they each testify to a part of the Divine idea which is less emphatically presented by the rest. Each of them is open to criticism in regard to the measure in which, by means of its organization, it realizes the Divine intention. Each of them must be criticised as to the measure of its faithfulness to the revealed truth of God ; and tested by these standards one or other of them may be found seriously wanting. But so far forth as government is concerned no one of them—Congregationalist, Presbyterian, or Episcopalian—can be rejected as contradicting the Word of God or discontinuous with the early Church.

And with regard to the ministry, similar considerations must prevail. If Episcopal government cannot be shown to be a *necessity* for the Church's existence, then Episcopal ordination cannot be a necessity for the Christian ministry. If a succession by actual contact from the Apostles can neither be shown to be necessary nor proved anywhere to exist, some other basis must be sought for your Orders before God, and admitted by you in regard to the ministry of others.

What that basis is, the real basis of the Christian ministry, is plain from the New Testament and from the practice of the early Church. It is twofold.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> According to all “Catholic teaching” a twofold basis is requisite for valid ordination to the Episcopate as well as to the priesthood. But just as in the administration of the Lord’s Supper you make a serious departure from “Catholic tradition” by omitting all invocation of the Holy Spirit, so in the appointment of your bishops there is a similar departure from “Catholic principle” which suggests a fatal flaw in your Orders. For the first five centuries at least election by the people or the clergy was an essential to the status of a bishop as ordination by other bishops. This was recognised both in practice and in principle. Priscillian (about A.D. 380) declared that “as a bishop’s consecration lies with the bishop, so the choice of whom to ask for lies with the people.” And Leo the Great writes: “He who is to preside over all must be elected by all.” “No metropolitan should be allowed to ordain a priest (bishop) on his

The right to minister within the Church in whatever capacity depends upon, and arises from, the vocation of Christ through the Holy Spirit. God is still pleased to "reveal His Son" in men, to vouchsafe to them the heavenly vision they dare not disobey. He still calls men as He called the prophets of old, and their reply is : "Here am I, send me"; as he called St. Paul, and they say : "Lord, what wouldst Thou have me to do?" Such men, though they have no more, have the one absolutely essential qualification for the Christian ministry. They are ordained by the Holy Ghost.

This does not mean that we are bound to accept as a minister of Christ every man who puts himself forth as such. Christ's people will of course prefer to risk entertaining a false prophet rather than risk putting a true prophet to the door. But "by their fruits ye shall know them" is the one test authorized by Christ, and it is sufficient in the hands of spiritual men.

own judgment without the consent of clergy and people." For other evidence see Gore, *Church and Ministry*, p. 93, from whom these quotations are taken.

It must be a serious question for you whether in departing as far as you have done from "Catholic teaching" in this matter you have not lost Catholicity and invalidated the consecration of your bishops.

Some are ministers of Christ who are not necessarily ministers of the Church ; but no Church dare admit that a man be her minister without being a minister of Christ, ordained by Him. Her function is to test, as far as human judgment can, first, the claim of a man to have been called of God to the holy ministry ; and second, his qualifications or other kinds for the ministry of a particular Church. She also claims to be guided by the Spirit, and in setting apart or ordaining men whom she has thus tested she stamps with the recognition of human judgment her belief in the Divine call and in the qualification of the candidate for her ministry.

It makes no difference whether the Church fulfils this function through a local congregation, through a presbytery or through a bishop. It is an inherent right of every community of Christians to ordain unto itself a minister or ministers. Such a minister in no wise “takes unto himself” this office. He receives it from the hands of those who alone have a right to bestow, the organized people of God. Orders are for the sake of orderliness. One condition is absolute and common to all—the call of God to the ministry. Every other condition is left to the judgment of each particular Church. My Church requires a man to know

Hebrew, yours does not ; yours requires him to be ordained by a bishop, mine by a presbytery. Another Church may require neither Hebrew nor Greek, neither bishop nor presbytery ; but when a body of Christ's people has ascertained that a man sincerely professes to have received the Divine call, and with one accord invokes the gift of the Holy Spirit upon him for the office of the ministry, will you venture to say that any essential condition has been omitted ? They are acting certainly in accordance with New Testament precedent when the Holy Ghost said unto "certain prophets and teachers, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away."

For such a ministry the question of validity simply does not arise. The external attestation is of importance only for the good order of the Church ; its internal attestation is in the hearts of those on whose behalf it is exercised, through the continuous witness of the Holy Spirit. You ask by what authority I do these things. I preach because Jesus Christ has given commandment to all His disciples to preach the Gospel. I minister in a certain place because an organized body of His people have called me to be their

minister in the things of God. I celebrate the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper (I do not "administer" it; for that I can find no authority) because our Lord has commanded us to "Do this in remembrance" of Him; I preside at the celebration because an organized body of His disciples has committed to me the trust and dignity of presiding. Whatever right there may be in the bishop to ordain came to him at the first through delegation of powers which resided in the congregation. Such powers the congregation has still the right to commit to the men of its choice. The question of validity does not arise in connection with either ministry or Sacrament. Neither is there among us any "raising of the question of authority." "It is neither asserted on the one hand nor denied on the other, it is not even felt with any touch of self-consciousness on either side, but there is just a quiet, affectionate deference, which has no law because it needs none." And this, as Professor Sanday says, is "the ideal temper, the truly Christian temper, and therefore befitting the followers of Him who bade His disciples not to let themselves be called Rabbi."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sanday, *Conception of Priesthood*, p. 25.

It is a temper which disappears in presence of any claim to govern which is based on external authority, but it is a temper which is at home in those Churches that have a non-episcopal ministry.



## APOSTOLICAL SUCCESSION

“But where are the texts by which the maintainers of that doctrine have deemed themselves constrained to adopt it? They cannot produce one, not a single one, which, unless it be wrested awry, will lend them any support.”

“This monstrous error, however, which would restrict the power of Christ’s mediatorial sacrifice and the efficacy of His sacraments within the limits of Episcopal Churches, is still confined, I trust, to some of our weaker brethren who stake themselves up with positive peremptory assertion.”—**ARCHDEACON HARE.**

## XVI

### APOSTOLICAL SUCCESSION

THE chapter in Mr. Sadler's book headed "Apostolical Succession" amounts to an extraordinary acknowledgement of the weakness of the case in its favour. Here is the very centre of your position, the keystone of the arch you so laboriously erect. Mark its importance. Men, you say, cannot (normally) be saved without Sacraments. Sacraments are not valid unless administered by properly qualified officials. No man is properly qualified unless he has been ordained by a bishop of the Catholic Church. A bishop of the Catholic Church derives his right and power to ordain, to validate ministry and Sacraments, solely on the ground that he stands at the end of an unbroken chain of bishops at the other end of which are the Apostles, and that he has received through that chain a supernatural power to confer a supernatural grace.

Your Church, your Sacraments, your ministry stand or fall with the truth or falsehood of the theory that there is an Apostolic succession and that this Apostolical

succession is the means ordained by Christ Himself of securing grace and salvation.

It is to this theory that your present melancholy isolation is due. It becomes to some a justification, to others the unwelcome sanction, of your severance from the Churches of Christ around you. From it Canon Gore draws, we hope unwillingly, the inference “that the various Presbyterian and Congregational organizations, however venerable on many and different grounds, have, in dispensing with the Episcopal succession, violated a fundamental law of the Church’s life. . . . It follows, then, not that God’s grace has not worked and worked largely through many an irregular ministry when it was exercised or used in good faith, but that a ministry not episcopally received is invalid, that is to say falls outside the conditions of covenanted security and cannot justify its existence in terms of the covenant.”<sup>1</sup>

A theory upon which so much depends will surely be capable of convincing proof.

And yet, when I turn to look for its proof in Mr. Sadler’s book, I find with amazement no single word of our Lord, no single ordinance of His Apostles, no single quotation from the early Fathers offered in its support. I find ten pages, half of which are taken up with demolishing suppositions which no one supposes.

<sup>1</sup> Gore, *Church and Ministry*, 4th edition, p. 313.

The argument, if it can be called such, amounts to this: the Apostle Paul did not ordain a Presbyterian system as a permanency; therefore he must have established Episcopacy, an Apostolical succession of bishops. If he had established Presbyterianism, Presbyterianism, Mr. Sadler thinks, is too strong a system to have allowed itself to have been disestablished within a century. No! "In all human probability" he committed to others the same power to govern and ordain as he committed to Timothy and Titus. "Christian liberty was strangled at its very birth by no other than Apostolic hands." "Apostolic succession, as a principle of continuity in the Church, seems required by the ideal of the Church as set forth by Christ and by His servant St. Paul" (pp. 334, 337).

It is vain for him to ask somewhat petulantly, "What is the use of endeavouring to prove a break between them and us?" when these are the only arguments you can produce in favour of a continuity. Such claims as you make for your own ministry and such exclusion as you pronounce upon all other ministries must have something stronger to support them than "all human probability." You have still to prove that Apostolic succession is necessary, that you have it, and that others lack it.

There is nothing more to the point in the argument of Canon Knox Little. He also says of Dissenters:

“In all honesty we do not believe them to possess a valid ministry,” and bases this dictum, of course, on the doctrine of Apostolic succession. But he does not even pretend to offer any proof that the doctrine is Scriptural or primitive. He contents himself with showing that it is held, or may be held, by the Church of England.

Whether this is so or not is a matter which I am not concerned to discuss. That many high authorities in the English Church have held that their ministry was included in an Apostolic succession, and in some sense confirmed by it, is no doubt true ; but that the best authorities even in your own Church have held Apostolic succession as excluding all other forms of ministry is not true.

“It should be distinctly borne in mind that the more sweeping refusal to recognise the non-episcopal Reformed Churches is not, and never can be, made a doctrine of the Church of England. Too many of her most representative men have not shared in it ; Hooker did not hold it ; Andrewes expressly disclaimed it ; Cosin freely communicated with the French Reformed Church during his exile. Indeed, it is not until the last half of the present century that more than a relatively small minority of English Churchmen have been committed to it.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sanday, *Conception of Priesthood*, p. 95.

To these weighty words of Professor Sanday add the reluctant admission of Keble: "It might have been expected that the defenders of the English hierarchy against the first Puritans would take the highest ground, and challenge for the bishops the same unreserved submission on the same plea of exclusive Apostolical prerogative, which their adversaries feared not to insist on for their elders and deacons. It is notorious, however, that such was not in general the line preferred by Jewel, Whitgift, Cooper and others to whom the management of that controversy was entrusted during the early years of Elizabeth's reign. They do not expressly disavow, but they carefully shun, that unreserved appeal to Christian antiquity in which, one would have thought, they must have discerned the very strength of their cause to lie. It is enough with them to show that the government of archbishops and bishops is ancient and allowable; they never venture to urge its *exclusive* claim, or to connect the succession with the validity of the holy Sacraments; and yet it is obvious that such a course of argument alone (supposing it borne out by facts) could fully meet all the exigencies of the case."<sup>1</sup>

I have space only for one quotation from the Fathers of the English Church. Bishop Andrewes, inferior to none of them in theological authority,

<sup>1</sup> Keble, *Preface to Hooker's Works*, p. lxvii.

writes thus: “Though our government be by Divine right, it follows not that there is no salvation or that a Church cannot stand without it. He must needs be stone blind that sees not Churches standing without it. . . . Somewhat may be wanting that is of Divine right (at least in external government) and yet salvation may be had.”<sup>1</sup>

The same conclusion can be drawn from the whole attitude of your Church to the Reformed Churches of the Continent during two centuries. With very brief exceptions it was one entirely different from that you at present take up, and would have been impossible if adopted in conjunction with the exclusive view of Apostolic succession.

Certainly no presupposition in favour of the doctrine can be obtained from the history of the English Church.

But the one important question is, Can it be proved? I shall not be mistaken in taking Canon Gore’s book, *The Church and the Ministry*, as the most serious and scholarly attempt that has been made to prove it. It is a book which makes a great impression by its combination of learning and moderation, but nevertheless it fails to provide that demonstration with which alone you can be satisfied. For observe, you cannot be content with having shown that a chain of

<sup>1</sup> Andrewes, *Letters*, ii. p. 24.

succession from the Apostles is merely desirable and that its existence is merely probable ; you have to show that its existence is *certain*, and that it is the *only* channel of a valid ministry.

And we surely have a right to ask that those who hold the theory should agree among themselves as to its meaning and its principle. So that when we find, on the contrary, a whole crowd of uncertainties concerning these points, it seems hardly necessary to go further with the investigation. What is it that is transmitted from one officer to another ? Is it “supernatural grace,” “the grace of orders,” authority, priesthood, ministerial status, or what ? From whom does the transmission begin ? From our Lord, or from the Twelve, or from St. Paul ? If from our Lord, at what point in His ministry and in what words does it commence ? If from the Twelve, does it derive from them as individuals, or as a corporate body ? Again, how is it transmitted ? By Words of Institution, or by the “porrection of the instruments,” or by the intention of him who ordains ? Every alternative has been maintained at different times by different advocates of the theory and by all, of course, as “Catholic truth.” If you are not agreed as to what the thing is, and how it comes to be, how can you hope to prove that it is at all ?

For, notice that the theory of Apostolical succession

is not, according to its trained supporters, what it is supposed to be by “the man in the street.” It is not simply that one bishop makes another bishop, and that bishops alone can ordain priests. Such a conception cannot stand for a moment in face of the admission now generally made that there have been times and places in which true Churches were without bishops, or had bishops who were ordained not by bishops but by presbyters.

And so Canon Gore falls back on a description of “what is understood by the Apostolic succession of the ministry,” in which the name of Bishop is carefully avoided. And this is intentional, for, as he says, “It is a matter of very great importance to exalt the principle of the Apostolic succession above the question of the exact form of the ministry in which the principle has expressed itself, even though it be by Apostolic ordering.”

The question at once suggests itself, If the “principle” is not tied to some particular “form of the ministry,” why should it not “express itself” in other forms than the Episcopal? If the principle can be disengaged from the Episcopal form, then Apostolic succession may be, as in *my* sense I believe it is, the heritage of the whole Church.

Here is Canon Gore’s description stated as a hypothesis :

“Let it be supposed that Christ, in founding His Church, founded also a ministry in the Church in the persons of His Apostles. These Apostles must be supposed to have had a temporary function in their capacity as founders under Christ. In this capacity they held an office by its very nature not perpetual—the office of bearing the original witness to Christ’s resurrection and making the original proclamation of the Gospel. But underlying this was another—a pastorate of souls, a stewardship of Divine mysteries. This office instituted in their persons was intended to become perpetual, and that by being transmitted from its first depositaries. It was thus intended that there should be, in each generation, an authoritative stewardship of the grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ, and a recognised power to transmit it, derived from above, by Apostolic descent. The men who from time to time were to hold the various offices involved in the ministry and the transmitting power necessary for its continuance might, indeed, fitly be elected by those to whom they were to minister. In this way the ministry would express the representative principle. But their authority to minister, in whatever capacity, their qualifying consecration, was to come from above in such a sense that no ministerial act could be regarded as *valid*, that is as having the security of the Divine Covenant about it, unless it was

performed under the shelter of a commission received by the transmission of the original pastoral authority which has been delegated by Christ Himself to His Apostles.”

Now weigh carefully what is thus understood by the Apostolic succession.

Its importance is supreme, for apart from it “no ministerial act could be regarded as valid”; and yet no means is provided by which men are to recognise the channel along which the grace flows. No office or class of officers is specified who may be known as indubitably empowered to validate a ministry. Nothing could be vaguer than the description: “The men who from time to time were to hold the various offices involved in the ministry, and the transmitting power necessary for its continuance.”. It would include a line of descent, were such a one conceivable, which did not embrace a single bishop.

Observe, further, the fatal leap from “an authoritative stewardship” to a “qualifying consecration” excluding every other ministry. Could it even be shown that our Lord did commit “authoritative stewardship” to the Twelve, there is a gulf between this and exclusive authority, and there is no authoritative word of Christ or His Apostles to bridge it.

But there are questions antecedent to all this, to some of which we have already sought an answer in

vain. When did Christ bestow on His Apostles a pastorate of souls, or a stewardship of Divine mysteries, which they did not share with other men?

You will probably answer by pointing to one or other of three occasions when He seems to have bestowed power of some kind upon men who believed in Him. On the first, He addressed Peter as representing the whole Church; on the second, "the disciples," by which we must understand a body larger than the Twelve; on the third, ten out of eleven Apostles assembled together with Cleopas and an unnamed disciple, and in all probability with a large number besides.

When did He limit the pastorate of souls either to the Apostles or to those whom they ordained?

When did they, the Twelve, transmit, or show any intention of transmitting, this undefined gift to others?

Who were the "others"? Apparently we are not to assume that in the first or second generations, at any rate, they were bishops. The "pastorate" and the power to transmit it must, for a period at least, have resided in men who were neither episcopally ordained nor of episcopal rank. But at some unascertained point we find that the power of transmission has passed into the hands of a newly-developed class called bishop, and from henceforth resides in them alone. Here, again, is a fatal leap.

Or does the chain start from St. Paul? Whom did he ordain with his own hands alone? Or whom did he ordain acting in conjunction with other Apostles? Any gift which he taught Timothy to associate with his ordination depended, as we have seen, on the operation of prophecy, concurring with the laying on of hands by a body of presbyters acting with the Apostle.

To these questions we look in vain for an answer. It seems equally impossible to ascertain where the channel commences, through what persons it runs, and what the nature of the gift it conveys. Still further, the uncertainty (and remember that in this matter uncertainty is fatal) which lies round the very first stage of the succession is greatly increased by the serious doubt whether the Twelve received from Christ any permanent commission to govern at all.

Dr. Hort, after his very minute examination of the New Testament, announces his conclusion, “that in its original sense the term Apostle was not intended to describe the habitual relation of the Twelve to our Lord during the days of His ministry, but, strictly speaking, only the mission among the villages.”

And, still more important, he says: “There is indeed, as we have seen, no trace in Scripture of a formal commission of authority for government from Christ Himself. Their commission was to be wit-

nesses for Himself, and to bear that witness by preaching and by healing."

We have, in fact, the Apostles' own description of the function they understood to have been committed to them in the words, "We will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the Word." Had they been conscious that in themselves alone lay the power to administer valid Sacraments and to transmit the valid Orders on which the very existence of the Church depended, is it conceivable that they would have given this definition of their own functions?

"Round this, their definite function," says Dr. Hort, "grew up, in process of time, an indefinite authority, the natural and right and necessary consequence of their unique position"; but "it came to the Apostles by the ordinary action of Divine providence, not (as far as we can see) by any formal Divine command."

"The Apostles were not in any proper sense officers of the ecclesia."<sup>1</sup> And the testimony of Dr. Hort does not stand alone, for we find Dr. Sanday agreeing with him. He sums up, after the examination of these passages just referred to,<sup>2</sup> thus:

"It cannot be said that any one of these passages

<sup>1</sup> See Hort, *The Christian Ecclesia*, pp. 28, 84, 230.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xvi. 19, xviii. 18; John xx. 22.

points to powers conferred upon the Twelve as such. It is more probable than not that others were included in the commission given besides the Twelve. And even if the Twelve had a certain prerogative, it would seem to be less in their own right than as representing the whole body of the Church.”<sup>1</sup>

Similarly of another group of passages, “in which the Apostles are singled out more expressly,” the same authority pronounces : “No doubt these allusions imply a special dignity on the part of the Twelve, but there is nothing to show that this dignity included a direct commission to govern.”<sup>2</sup>

In the face of these authorities I do not see how you can evade the admission that it is at least doubtful whether the Apostles had “original pastoral authority” themselves ; and if so, is it not something more than hazardous to rest so tremendous a doctrine on the assertion that they transmitted it ? Is it not something more than reckless to deny a valid ministry to those who seek the Divine commission in another way ?

But once more, when you have passed out of the Apostolic age, you find yourself involved in still greater uncertainties. The Jewish priests, in whose succession you find a Scriptural analogy to your own, all

<sup>1</sup> Sanday, *The Conception of Priesthood*, p. 49.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 50.

belonged to one family, and could trace their line, generation after generation, back to Aaron. By what line were the Orders you trust in transmitted, say, to the mediæval Church? Does it start from Jerusalem? There is no good reason to suppose that James was a bishop. If he is called an Apostle, it is certainly not in the same sense as the Twelve. And who were his successors? Perhaps you produce the list in Eusebius. Canon Gore refers to it, the thirteen Jewish bishops and the thirteen Gentile bishops, and says: "There can be at least no doubt of the existence in Jerusalem of an Episcopal succession of immemorial antiquity." But Mr. C. H. Turner has just investigated that list, and come to the conclusion that it is not authentic, and that therefore "we cannot adduce the succession at Jerusalem as a continuous witness to primitive Episcopacy."<sup>1</sup> Neither, of course, can it be adduced as the channel of Apostolic succession.

Or does it come through Corinth? "It is as certain as any historical fact can well be that there was no bishop in the important Church of Corinth when Clement wrote."<sup>2</sup>

Or do you trace your line through Rome? Your only comfort there is that everything is possible where nothing is known.

<sup>1</sup> *Journal of Theological Studies*, July, 1900.

<sup>2</sup> H. M. Gwatkin, *The Church Past and Present*, p. 169.

“With all the importance attributed to the Roman Church, it is the more remarkable that not a word is said about the Roman bishop. Indeed, there is not the faintest hint that a Bishop of Rome existed at this time (the time of Ignatius). Yet, startling as the omission is, it entirely accords with the information derived from other trustworthy sources. All the ancient notices point to the matured development of Episcopacy in Asia Minor at this time. On the other hand, all the earliest notices of the Church in Rome point in the opposite direction.”<sup>1</sup>

The various catalogues of the first bishops of Rome contradict one another in all directions, and the probability is that up to A.D. 118 there was no bishop at Rome at all.

Is there any need to go further? Remember that once lost, the succession, upon this theory, can never be restored. And remember that on your theory only an absolutely certain succession can give you a valid ministry and an assured salvation.

You ask, perhaps, When and how, then, did this theory arise and take such deep root in the Church?

In the sense in which you use it, of a transmission of ministerial grace from generation to generation by virtue of ordination, the theory is not earlier than the end of the second century.

<sup>1</sup> Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, pt. i. vol. i. p. 383.

The history is given thus by Professor Harnack :

“Hence arose quite naturally the representation that the Apostles had themselves appointed the first officials of the Christian community. This may have had some foundation in some actual instances ; but that need not be considered here, for these instances would not in themselves have led to the setting up of a theory. But it is with a theory that we have to do, which is nothing else than an integrating element in the general theory that the twelve Apostles formed in every respect the middle term between Jesus and the congregation of the present. This conception is older than the Gnostic crisis. . . . Men felt the independence and sovereignty of the congregation in no way threatened by it, because an appointment by Apostles was regarded as equivalent to appointment by the Holy Ghost, whom they had and whom they followed ; whereas the independence of the congregations rested precisely on this—that they had the Spirit in their midst. In the subsequent period the conception thus briefly sketched was wholly transformed by the addition of one thought—that of the Apostolic succession ; and this, in conjunction with the assertion of the priesthood of the chief officer in the congregation, became the most effectual means for his exaltation over the congregation.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Harnack, *Dogmengeschichte*, p. 184.

But are there not found in the Christian literature even of the first two centuries references to the succession of officers in the Church as an important feature in Christian apologetics? Certainly there are, especially in Clement and Irenæus. But those who quote Irenæus fail to observe *what* it is that those successions are supposed to guarantee, *what* it is that they are counted on to transmit. It is not what you expect from Apostolic succession, not the grace of Orders, or a valid ministry, or even power to administer the Sacraments, but something quite different. It is the witness borne by men in successive generations, who have been in contact with one another, to the facts and doctrines of Christianity. “It is mainly as preserving the Catholic traditions that Irenæus regards the Apostolic succession.”<sup>1</sup>

As regards the passage in St. Clement’s Epistle to the Corinthians, which is often referred to by your writers, it will suffice to say, on the authority of Professor Sanday, that “he does not hint in any way at a transmission of powers.” The “other men of repute” “are not, as some translations of Clement’s language might lead us to suppose, placed on the direct line of descent from the Apostles.”

My object in this discussion of your theory of Apo-

<sup>1</sup> Gore, *The Church and the Ministry*, p. 109.

stolic succession has been twofold : first, to show the impossibility of proving its truth ; and second, to do this on the authority of men distinguished for scholarship in your own Church. Much more might be said as to the melancholy results and unfortunate inferences which have followed from the theory. But surely I have said enough. Is it vain to hope that on consideration of all the facts you will recognise that it is untenable, and, on recognition of its ill results for our common Christianity, abandon it as the unjustifiable cause or the rending of the Body of Christ ?



## THE CHURCH

“Ecclesia ibi est, ubi vera fides est.”—JEROME.

“Ubi Spiritus Dei, illic ecclesia.”—IRENAEUS.

Corpus sumus de conscientia religionis et disciplinae  
unitate et spei foedere.”—TERTULLIAN.

## XVII

### THE CHURCH

THERE is an accusation commonly laid against Protestants, that they ignore, or at least belittle, the doctrine of the Church, and particularly that they substitute for the visible Church a doctrine of the Church invisible which is neither Scriptural nor primitive.

The accusation is wholly unjust, as a very brief survey of the Protestant Confessions, of the best Protestant writers, or of the organization of the Protestant Churches would convince you. It is no part of the Protestant system to deny or to belittle the visible Church on earth. It would be hard to find stronger language on the subject than that of John Calvin : “A departure from the Church would be a renunciation of God and of Christ.” We revere the visible Church as the fellowship of the saints, the household of faith, the pillar and ground of truth, the sacred Society which Christ has called into being, and main-

tains in life through the continuous operation of His Spirit.

The Church is at once natural and supernatural, developed from below and confirmed and consecrated from above, a human Society and a Divine Institution. It is a human society in so far as it is made up of human beings united in a common life to carry out a common aim. It is the highest and most inclusive form of that principle of association which is the basis of all human Society. Successive manifestations of the same principle are seen in the family, the tribe, the nation, and the State. The importance and dignity of the Society increases with the progressive expansion of the common purpose and the progressive widening of the included area ; until the principle finds its highest application in that Society which has for its aim the kingdom of God, and for its ideal limits only the limits of mankind.

But the Church is also a Divine Institution, the continuation of the fellowship of disciples founded by Christ Himself, constituted by His Spirit as it had been foreshadowed by His teaching. It is true that Jesus said but little directly about this Institution, nothing about its government, and nothing explicit about the conditions of belonging to it. Its character has to be partly inferred from the purpose of its institution. Its purpose, on the other hand, has to be

inferred partly from the character of those who first formed its fellowship, The visible Church is to the Spirit of Christ what the body of Jesus was to the Eternal Word. It is the instrument of the Spirit's contact with the world, the organ of His operation in carrying on the redeeming and revealing ministry of Christ. The Church has, therefore, a double function ; on the one hand to proclaim and continually reiterate before an unbelieving world the facts of the Gospel, to be the organ of the Spirit in preaching the Word of God and applying it to the changing conditions of human life ; and on the other hand to educate and prepare its own members for the life to come by the edifying power of Word and Sacrament, and through the special operation of the Spirit within its sphere.

The first generation of Christians did not seek any definition of the Church, neither did they elaborate any theory of its nature, its government, or of the conditions of its membership. They had no need of such theories. The formation of the Church had been the necessary and spontaneous expression of that spiritual union and mutual fellowship into which believers felt themselves brought by their common relation to the ascended Lord. There was no convention in favour of the new religion such as to cause danger of intrusion by unworthy members and require

conditions of membership to be stringently defined. A “conquering new-born joy” distinguished those who had found in the crucified Messiah the Saviour from sin and death. The same joy filled the hearts of those who were moved by the preaching of the Apostles to believe in the same Saviour. Whether, as in some cases, Baptism preceded, or whether, as in others, it followed, the gift of the Spirit, both the outward profession and the inward calling were consequent on the turning of the soul to Christ. Men gave themselves first to Him and afterwards to the Church.

But though in the consciousness of the early Church Christ and not the Church was the one living way to the Father, the first generation did not either overlook the importance or underestimate the glory of the new Society. The Epistles of the New Testament reflect as part of the Christian consciousness, under the direct inspiration of the Spirit, the conviction of the Church’s existence, not merely in figure, but as a real spiritual entity, the recognition of her special privilege as an object of Divine Love, and an even rapturous exultation in her promised destiny. The Church is presented as God’s heritage, as the field of His husbandry, as the edifice which He is building, into which believers are continuously being wrought as living stones into a spiritual Temple. The

Church is the family of God's children in earth and heaven, the household of God over which Christ rules as a Son in His own house. Or, under a yet more striking figure, it is the Bride of Christ, purchased by His blood, and being cleansed and sanctified by the operation of His Spirit to the end that at last she may be presented to Him a glorious Church without spot or blemish. Once more, the Church is actually the Body of Christ, the organ of His continued activity, in which His Spirit dwells as the soul dwells in the body of man. Of this Body, again, Christ is the Head, and all true believers are members, endowed with divers gifts and functions, but all partaking in His life and contributing to the perfection of the whole.

This Church had its birthday on the day of Pentecost, when the promise of Jesus was fulfilled, and the Holy Spirit descended, not only on the Apostles, but also on the other disciples, men and women, who were gathered with them in the upper room. This highest and all-inclusive gift was bestowed on all alike who believed. In the days of its infancy the Church was actually what afterwards it was defined to be—One, Holy and Catholic. It was externally as well as internally One. The different types of Christian thought and of Christian character lay still undeveloped within the single and simple experience of faith in a Saviour crucified and risen. It was for a moment

actually as well as ideally holy, inspired to a singular degree by the spirit of brotherhood, self-sacrifice and enthusiasm for the kingdom of Righteousness. And it was literally Catholic, that is inclusive of all those who were united to Christ by faith.

But only for a brief period did the Church display these attributes to sight as well as to faith, in reality as well as in idea. It soon ceased to be externally One through the mere multiplication of centres. As has been pointed out by Dr. Hort : “At first the oneness is a visible fact, due simply to its limitation to the one City of Jerusalem. Presently it enlarges and includes all the Holy Land, becoming ideally co-terminous with the Jewish Ecclesia. But at length discipleship on a large scale springs up at Antioch, and so we have a new Ecclesia. By various words and acts the community of purpose and interests between the two Ecclesiæ is maintained ; but they remained two.” It follows that if external unity were an absolute condition of the Church’s existence there was a point even within New Testament times when it ceased to be. In other words, the continuity which we all recognise is seen to depend on a unity which is other than external.

Again, the inevitable decline of the first fresh enthusiasm, the intrusion of less worthy members, diminished the intensity of spiritual life and disturbed

the disciples' singleness of aim. The Church ceased to be actually or even approximately holy. And once again, as the contents of the Christian revelation began to unfold to the consciousness of the Church, inevitable variations of type both in doctrine and practice began to appear. As these were reproduced and became intensified, the one appeared to the other to transgress the limit of allowable variation ; the one denounced the other as heretical and disloyal to the faith ; and the Church ceased to be literally Catholic. The very word "Catholic" lost and even reversed its meaning ; it became the badge of a party. In the Arian controversy both parties, Arians and Athanasians, claimed the standing and used the name of "Catholic."

The result of this threefold process was that the three attributes of Oneness, Sanctity and Catholicity ceased to be part of the living experience of the Church. Two courses were then open, either to transfer these attributes from the real to the ideal Church, to make them matters of faith to be slowly realized in time and consummated in eternity ; or to materialize them, emptying them of ethical meaning and reducing them to wholly external marks of a visible Institution. It was, unfortunately, the second of these courses which was followed by the Church of the fifth and subsequent centuries. But in adopting it she departed from the example of the earlier and purer

Church down to the Nicene period. For when Christendom came in the third and fourth centuries to express its consciousness in a Creed, it was in this form, “*I believe in one Catholic and Apostolic Church.*” That is to say, the Church was already recognised as an object of faith, not of knowledge. It was put on the same plane with “*the communion of the saints,*” and with “*forgiveness of sins.*” The One, Holy and Catholic Church was like the individual believers of which it was composed : its holiness was potential, promised, not real, but in process of being realized. It found a true manifestation of itself in the visible Church, but in the fulness of its essential qualities it was to be found “*in heaven.*”

It may be true that this distinction between the visible and the invisible Church was not formulated before the Reformation. But it was felt, and its importance was pressed upon men’s minds from more sides than one. The primitive Church was the whole Church. All its members were within mortal ken. But when a few years had elapsed, there was a change in two directions. On the one hand members began to pass away ; but they did not cease to be members of Christ’s Church ; they were still cherished in the memory and in the fellowship of those who remained on earth. And so the Church “*widened on man’s view*” : it became larger than the visible

community on earth. On the other hand growing social influence and earthly attractiveness led to the admission to its fellowship of men and women who proved to be lacking in the inward experience of fellowship with Christ. They had satisfied the only test which could be imposed for admission, namely, profession of faith ; but they failed to satisfy the demands of the Christian conscience for the fruits of the Spirit. With the conviction that some of those who were outwardly members of the Church were not inwardly members of Christ, came the discovery that the Church on earth was smaller than the visible Church. Thus men came necessarily to the recognition not of two Churches, but the one Church under two aspects, the actual and the ideal, the Church as seen by men and the Church as seen by God. Measured by the standard of sight, the Church was the community of those on earth who professed belief in the Lord Jesus Christ ; as presented to faith, it consisted of all those on earth or in heaven who, by a living faith, had received power to become the sons of God. As individual believers may be described as those who “are being saved,” so the Church visible is the Church that is being sanctified to find its perfect consummation as the completed Church invisible.

The Church of the Middle Ages erred by over-emphasizing the visibility of the Church and the

visible marks which it claimed. It continued to deck itself with the old names, but the things they signified had changed. Unity was no longer unity of spirit, harmony of aim, homogeneity of life, but communion with, which meant submission to, the Bishop of Rome. Holiness was affirmed as an attribute of the Institution with the tacit admission that it might or might not be found in the individual members of the Church. Catholicity ceased to represent an inclusive spirit of love, rejoicing in the unity of the Spirit and breaking down walls of partition ; it became an exclusive spirit of sectarianism, erecting barriers and defending them. Forgetting that its Founder had clearly announced, “My kingdom is not of this world,” it aimed more and more at impressing men through the senses and controlling them by controlling the political movements of the world. Outside this Church, thus defined by external marks and indifferent to its moral mission, there was no salvation. Within its pale salvation could be guaranteed on conditions which tended less and less to be moral ones and more and more to be material and even pecuniary.

The Churches of the Reformation recovered for Christendom the ideal of the Church as a kingdom of Righteousness. The obvious and unavoidable discrepancy between the Church as it should be and the Church as it was, forced them to formulate the dis-

tinction between the invisible and the visible Church. This was done with great clearness, while at the same time the substantial identity of the two was firmly grasped by the best Protestant theologians. Where shall we find a better definition of the Church than in the Westminster Confession ?

“ The catholic or universal Church which is invisible, consists of the whole number of the elect that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one under Christ, the Head thereof.” On the other hand, “ The visible Church, which is also catholic or universal, . . . consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion, together with their children ; and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation.”

The Protestant Churches claim most definitely to be portions or branches of the one Holy Catholic Church on earth.

They are untouched by the reproach you level at them, that they themselves are many and not one, or that they are separated from that which you are pleased to recognise as “ the one true Church ” ; for they rejoice in a unity to which you seem to be blind, a oneness with one another, and, if you permit it, even with you, infinitely more real than that to which you invite them.

They are unmoved even by the appeal so often made to the sacred words of our Lord, His prayer that “they all may be one.” They stand before these words with a clear conscience; for they accept as their ideal that spiritual unity to which they believe Him to refer.

You, on the other hand, insist that the unity of the Church, the unity for which our Lord thus prayed, can only be realized in a uniformity of organization.

What is this fantastic notion of yours, that the only true unity is an external one, a unity of organization and government? Is it not contradicted by many phenomena of our daily life? Is it not conspicuously contradicted by a phenomenon which is specially present to our minds at this time—the unity of our Empire? We rejoice in that unity as a very real thing; and yet what uniformity is there to be found in its organization or government? We have at home a constitutional monarchy; abroad, a federated commonwealth of democracies, a self-governing dominion, crown colonies, parliamentary colonies, dependencies, protected states—almost every conceivable variety of constitution and type of government. And yet the whole is *One*—one with a oneness more real and more intense than were there a uniform constitution for every part. The British

Empire is a unity through the operation of a moral principle—common loyalty to the British Sovereign ; the rights and duties of citizens, laws, franchises, and privileges vary indefinitely in different parts of the Empire ; but their variation does not affect by a jot the essential unity of the whole.

Is it not absurd, then, to deny that the kingdom of God upon earth can manifest a like unity, in spite of a similar lack of uniformity in organization and government ? All its various parts are bound by a yet stronger bond to a higher King. Love and loyalty raised to their highest power knit every true member of every Church to one Head of all. They also knit him to all true believers in the same Lord. How can they fail to knit at the same time into a real unity the Churches to which His members belong ?

It would be a poor patriotism that denied to our Australian colonies a standing, and an equal standing, with ourselves in the British Empire on the ground that they have not got a House of Lords. It is surely a poor Christianity which denies to certain branches of the Church an equal standing with the rest on the ground that they have not a Bench of Bishops.

You totally misunderstand these Churches and ignore the strength of their position if you offer them your toleration or your patronage, still more if you

give them over to “the uncovenanted mercies of God.” What you sometimes, with a strange lack of spiritual insight, interpret into signs of submission are, in truth, wistful efforts towards realizing in some outward way that spiritual unity which they believe, and will believe, to exist. But for themselves they stand indefeasibly seised of all rights and privileges belonging to the Church One, Holy and Catholic, which Christ is sanctifying to Himself.

And though in this matter also some Protestants are tempted, by the extravagance of much “catholic” language about the Church, to fall back into the other extreme, and say less perhaps than they think, in practice they do infinitely more honour to the one great Church principle than you do.

In looking back over these letters, I am much impressed by one thing, which takes me, I must confess, by surprise, namely the attitude of contempt for the Church which seems the characteristic note of the Anglo-Catholic movement. This attitude is not, of course, expressed in words—far otherwise ; but it is displayed in facts—the persistent contempt, suspicion or hostility with which you and those you look up to treat the Church of Christ. Neither do I mean that you are conscious of this attitude ; I believe you are wholly unconscious. But observe—

To His Church our Blessed Lord gave authority

to baptize, to admit to its fellowship those who were duly qualified. You have transferred this authority from the people of Christ to an order of clergy.

To His Church He gave commandment to commemorate His death in the Sacrament of thanksgiving and communion. You have transformed this duty and privilege of all into a prerogative of the few. Where the Church should communicate and commemorate you have a priest who "administers the Sacrament" or "offers a sacrifice."

To His Church Christ gave authority to remit or to retain sins, *i.e.* to declare the judgment of the Holy Spirit concerning the sins of men. You have taken this away from the Church, and appropriated it as a special prerogative to the priest. You deny to the Church the very opportunity of expressing its mind on this or any subject whatever.

To the Church the Holy Spirit gave commandment and authority to "separate," to appoint, to recognise fit men for the various offices of the ministry. For several generations this power was exercised universally by Christ's disciples, wherever they were congregated. To speak of it as "popular election" suggests a false analogy. It is the Church acting as organ of the Spirit, choosing the men whom God has chosen. But this privilege, inherent in its very being, you take away from the Church, and make

over to individuals of any Church or of no Church. You, and you alone in all Christendom, have turned the cure of souls into a marketable asset.

One by one, therefore, you have taken from the Church the privileges bestowed upon it by its Founder and given them to the clergy, or to the State, or to those who have bought them for gold.

In theory you repudiate—all the best men among you do—that conception of the Church which would identify it with the clergy. You recognise this as a mediæval and Roman corruption. Some of you make honest, but, alas ! futile efforts to recover for the Church some at least of its original privileges, to restore the “people of God” to their true place, no longer as a *corpus*, in which the clergy are mind and will, but as the living Body of Christ, organ of God’s grace to the world, and organ of man’s best worship of God. But these efforts are practically vain. Why ? Is it not time to ask whether it is not because the “historic Episcopate” to which you are pledged represents a system fundamentally incompatible with Christ’s idea of the Church ? Is it not because, though it does not in terms deny, yet in fact it invalidates, the universal priesthood and the universal kingship, the ministry and the authority of the whole body of Christ’s people ?

You speak somewhat hastily and contemptuously

of non-episcopal bodies as disparaging or ignoring the visible Church. But who are they who most truly honour her? Not those who in speech and sermons exalt the Church, and mean all the time, in practice at least, the clergy ; but surely they who trust themselves to the Church, to the organized body of believing men and women, they who are humbly obedient to her, saving only their due obedience to her Head, they who devise means to enable and encourage her to express her mind in the admission or removal of her members, in interpreting her consciousness inspired by the Holy Spirit, and in working the works of Christ.

This is undeniably the ideal of the non-episcopal Churches. Can you deny that it is an important part of the ideal of the Church of Christ according to the New Testament and to primitive practice ? That it is completely or perfectly realized in any quarter I do not say. But I do say that those who through generation after generation make effort and sacrifice for its realization cannot be charged with disparaging the Church.

At the same time they show their belief in the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Here again your theory and your practice are at issue. No one would charge you with the heresy of denying the Holy Spirit or confining His operations to a mere fraction of the

Church. But when or how do you show the slightest confidence in His power to guide the people of Christ, to lead laity and clergy alike into all truth? The recognition of this was one of the most distinguishing notes in the early Church. It is a note conspicuously lacking in your Church of to-day.

It is impossible to read without distress such words as the following from the pen of Canon Gore: “Did Christ in instituting His Society leave it to itself to find out its need of a differentiation of functions and develop a ministry, or did He, on the other hand, when He constituted His society, constitute its ministry also in the germ?” A moment’s examination shows that there is no proper alternative here. No Christian supposes that Christ left His Society in any sense “to itself.” Every Christian rejoices that the Master’s great promise was fulfilled and that the “other Paraclete” has come and abides for evermore in His Church, to give guidance and inspiration, not only to individuals, but to the whole.

The really doubtful position is that of those who “take to themselves the office” of deciding and legislating for the Church when they are neither the Church itself nor in any true sense its representatives. Even if Apostolic succession were not itself a baseless fable, it would be an open question whether officials nominated by the Crown “do not lack an absolutely

essential condition" for the authoritative interpretation of the mind of the Spirit in the Church. That is a matter for yourselves to settle. For us it is sufficient to know that in organization and discipline we not only profess our reverence for the Church and our belief in the Holy Spirit, but give continuous practical effect to our belief.

But further, this narrowing in practice of the idea of the Church, and of the scope of the Spirit's inspiring activity is characteristic of the whole system which you call "Catholic truth."

In Apostolic succession we see a forcible narrowing of the channel of God's grace, a materializing of the real spiritual succession which unites the ministry of the Church from generation to generation, mediated not by mechanical imposition of hands but by the calling and commission of the same Spirit.

In the Eucharistic sacrifice we see the forcible narrowing of the great idea that the sacrifice well-pleasing in the sight of God is the offering up of human hearts and lives, sanctified by the Spirit; we see the materializing of the spiritual presence of Christ under the "forms" of bread and wine.

In the priesthood of the ministry we see the forcible narrowing of a universal priesthood, till it becomes the prerogative of a class, not the heritage of the whole; we see the materializing of a ministry whose instru-

ments should be the Word and prayer into one which operates by a kind of magic, efficacious apart from moral and spiritual qualifications in him who gives or in him who receives.

As we reflect on these things there seems indeed a great barrier between us. It is one which will not be removed by ignoring differences so serious. But let me once more before I close remind you and myself how wide and deep is the ground common to us all—“One Lord, one Faith,” and, if I may not say “one Baptism,” “one God and Father of all.” One Spirit also to lead both into all truth. His guidance, I trust, I have not resisted in anything I have written. May He guide you who read. The ground out of which we quarry is the same truth of God revealed by the same Saviour, and I still somehow hope that the spiritual Temples we are severally rearing may prove in the end to be parts of one whole far greater than either of us has deemed.

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